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**Divine Harmony Amongst Many Spheres: The Relationship Between Literal and
Metaphoric Music in Shakespeare and its Religious Implications**

A thesis completed in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors of
Arts in English from The College of William and Mary

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DIVINE HARMONY AMONGST MANY SPHERES: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERAL AND METAPHORIC MUSIC IN SHAKESPEARE AND ITS RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS

I. Introduction

The Elizabethan era was characterized by a different philosophical conception of music. Elizabethan audiences were aurally sensitive and experienced drama as an acoustic phenomenon. Although Shakespeare is now read more than performed, he wrote his works for sound rather than for print and included many songs in his plays that were sung in performance (Johnson, “*Hamlet: Voice, Music, and Sound*,” 258). It is therefore important to understand how Shakespeare intended his plays to sound in order to better appreciate their original effect. While critics know Shakespeare’s choice of lyrics was intentional, they often forget that the choice of melody was intentional as well, and therefore they tend to ignore the effect these melodies might have helped to create. Although it is nearly impossible to say with certitude which tunes Shakespeare employed in his original productions, records suggesting particular melodies survive and by studying these probable tunes, scholars can make assertions about his reasoning for choosing a certain type of melody and how that choice would have altered the production. I intend to investigate the combined effect of these probable melodies with the lyrics and analyze their role in either promulgating or complicating interpretations of the work.

The Elizabethan conception of music instrumentally informed Shakespeare’s musical choices. Ideas about musical harmony in the Elizabethan period were integrally linked to notions of order and structure. Renaissance scholars believed that the mathematical proportions of 1:2, 2:3, and 3:4, which result in the intervals of perfect harmony in ancient music, or the octave, the

perfect fifth, and the perfect fourth, were also responsible for the numerical structure of the universe and “the form and constitution of man” (King, 152). These theories were influenced by the important 6th century treatise by Boethius entitled *De Institutione Musica*, which expressed similar ideas of order.¹ According to Boethius, the proper study of music was divided into three: performed aural music (*musica instrumentalis*), music of the body and the soul (*musica humana*), and music of cosmological harmony (*musica mundana*) (Ortiz, 79). For Boethius, the study of music was entirely theological and these divisions of music were incorporated into religious investigation (Bell, 365). During the Middle Ages, the four major areas of intellectual pursuit were known as the *quadrivium* and consisted of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. Of these, only music was thought to have a direct link to the supernatural, and therefore the mathematical ratios of music informed understanding of divine order (Bell, 366).

As the Middle Ages progressed and scholasticism became prominent, particularly in the 13th century, Aristotle’s theories grew in popularity and came to the forefront of intellectual discussions.² Because Aristotle’s arguments contradicted those of Boethius, they came to supersede them. Boethius believed that the movement of heavenly bodies produced aural sound similar to *musica instrumentalis*, and it is for that reason that aural music was a proper field of

¹ Boethius was a 6th century philosopher and theologian. Nicolas Bell describes Boethius’s work, *De Institutione Musica*, by saying the following: “the extensive discussion of instrumental music was intended not simply as an exemplification of the geometrical principles of harmonic theory; they were also the first stage in an intellectual progression, first from *musica instrumentalis* to *musica humana*—from the practical understanding of the monochord to the understanding of the human soul—and ultimately from *musica humana* to *musica mundana*—to the divine plan of the world and the heavens, the music of the spheres” (Bell, 365).

² Scholasticism was the systemization of learning, particularly of philosophy and theology, that occurred during the Middle Ages. The scholastic method, or the dialectic discussion advocated for by scholasticism, was first mentioned in Aristotle’s *Topics*. Therefore, Aristotle played a large role in the development and the practice of scholasticism (Wallace).

study (Bell, 368).³ Scholars in the 14th century, however, preferred Aristotle's *De Caelo* to Boethius's *De Institutione Musica*, in which Aristotle argues that since objects produce sound according to their size, it is illogical that heavenly spheres produce sound that individuals cannot hear. A logical continuation of this was that since *musica instrumentalis* was therefore not directly associated with the movement of the heavenly spheres, it was not a proper course of theological study (Bell, 369). This differentiation came to support a developing prejudice against aural music that continued through early European history, as sensuous music was thought to connote sinful behavior (Winkler, 6). Although the popularity of Aristotle made Boethius's scientific observations obsolete long before the Elizabethan era, the metaphor of music as a reflection of harmonious human interaction and supernatural order continued to be a commonly used means of imagining the universe (Ortiz, 79). *De Institutione Musica* was a widely circulated document, particularly within universities, and educated Elizabethans were generally cognizant of its influence (Bell, 372).

Critics have long analyzed Shakespeare in terms of *musica humana* and *musica mundana*, expounding on the musical aspects of his works in relation to these two concepts. Rosalind King, in "'Then Murder's Out of Tune': The Music and Structure of *Othello*," examines how the actions of the characters work to either create or destroy the harmony in their relationships. She argues that "Cassio ironically reinforces his fall from favor in an attempt to create harmony. He takes it upon himself to provide the traditional musical awakening for the

³ The assumption that moving planets produce sound was also discussed by Pythagoras, Plato, and Cicero. Boethius continued in this tradition by arguing that "although the sound of the heavenly bodies does not actually penetrate our ears—which necessarily happens for many reasons—it is nevertheless impossible that such extremely fast motion of such large bodies should produce absolutely no sound, especially since the courses of the stars are joined by such harmonious union that nothing so perfectly united, nothing so perfectly fitted together, can be realized" (Boethius, 9, as quoted in Bell, 369)

bride and groom on the morning after the wedding night and has hired musicians to perform this aubade” (King, 154). Erin Minear takes this approach and develops it further in her article “Music and the Crisis of Meaning in *Othello*.” She explores how references to musical discord are related to discordant interactions between characters, and eventually posits that connections between these microcosmic interactions and the macrocosm of the universe are difficult to define. She states “if echoes of the unheard music of the divinely ordered world ever enter audibly into the play, it is difficult to tell just where these entrances occur and how these echoes manifest themselves” (Minear, 359). Both of these approaches focus on metaphoric music and textual references to music instead of addressing the *musica instrumentalis* detailed in the text.

F.W. Sternfeld in *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*, however, takes an opposing approach, looking closely at the aurally musical material. He provides a lengthy historical context for the ballads Ophelia references in her mad scene, making a strong musicological case for the likelihood that one was the original tune over another and analyzing their harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic structures. Jacquelyn Fox-Good continues in a similar vein, explaining in “Ophelia’s Mad Songs: Music, Gender, Power,” that critics have gone too far in seeing music as purely metaphoric and have overlooked the aurally musical material in the text. She then goes on to a detailed harmonic and musicological analysis of particular pieces, analyzing the *musica instrumentalis* in context (Fox-Good, 219). She suggests that relating the microcosm to the macrocosm could possibly be futile and that it is more important to understand what is literally occurring on the page than to try and make a larger statement about the purported world of the work. I disagree with Fox-Good in this regard, and my research interest lies in combining these two practices: I will analyze the aurally musical material present and then evaluate how that is a reflection, contradiction, or complication of the metaphoric music.

Given that Boethius understood music in a purely theological context, these three levels of music are almost always tied to an understanding of religion, and staunchly Christian Elizabethan audiences had very strong reactions to these Boethian distinctions (Bell, 365). *Musica instrumentalis* was characterized by a strict dichotomy. Harmonious music was thought to have mystical properties that, if used properly, could perform all sorts of miracles, including curing the afflicted. Contrastingly, discordant music was thought to provoke religious and political dissent and to rouse sinful, sensual passions (Winkler, 6). There was a growing controversy about the place of music in glorifying God that came with the Protestant Reformation, related to this dichotomy. Most importantly, however, *musica mundana* was associated with the order and justice created by a benevolent God. God's hand tuning the string of the universe was a recurrent Elizabethan symbol and *musica mundana* was seen as a way of connecting aural music with the harmony God created through his fair, structured cosmos.

Shakespeare used the association between the realms of music and the divine in his work, often supporting the notion of a systematic sense of order, although sometimes rejecting it entirely. He used different elements of dissonance and consonance on all three levels of music to make statements about universal structure. In terms of *musica instrumentalis*, mean-tone temperament, the typical manner of temperament used during the Elizabethan era in which thirds were pure and fifths were flattened by one quarter of a note, made some keys closer to perfect intonation, while likewise making other keys unusable (Barbour, 13). Bruce Johnson, in his article "*Hamlet*: Voice, Music, and Sound" argues that this convention meant that the Elizabethan ear was accustomed to greater degrees of consonance and dissonance than the modern ear (Johnson, 261). Therefore, I believe that Shakespeare's audiences were more aware

of and aurally attuned to these concepts and therefore more potentially receptive to his subtle suggestions.

Shakespeare's own religious history manifests itself through the relationship between music and questions of divinity in his work. The 16th century was one of great religious turmoil in England, as various rulers alternated between Catholicism and Protestantism, rarely exhibiting religious tolerance. Naturally, this constant shift in what one was supposed to and allowed to believe in caused great confusion and angst for English citizens. In 1533, Henry VIII officially declared himself "Supreme Head of the Church of England," thereby inherently converting all English citizens to Protestantism (Greenblatt, 89). Religious conviction is not easily swayed, however, and it was normal and expected at this time that a significant portion of the English population held on to tenets of Catholicism, regardless of what they were forced to outwardly practice (Greenblatt, 89). In 1553, Queen Mary Tudor reversed this decision, formally returning England to the Catholic faith and burning all prominent Protestant leaders at the stake. At Mary's death in 1558, however, Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne and shifted back to Protestantism, causing enormous stress and confusion for the English populace (Greenblatt, 91).

Although Elizabeth was a staunch Protestant, she was much more concerned with restoring order to the English national religion than with the fervor of Protestant sentiment felt amongst citizens. As long as citizens participated in weekly services of the Church of England, she did not pry into the purity of their convictions (Greenblatt, 92). When Shakespeare was six years old, however, John Felton, a well-known Catholic, nailed a letter to the house of the London Bishop formally excommunicating Queen Elizabeth. Pope Pius V stated that all Catholic English citizens should "presume not to obey her, or her monitions, mandates, and laws," or else they too would be excommunicated (Greenblatt, 92). Pope Pius's bold actions in

this instance reflect the intensity of pro-Catholic sentiment in England at this time. According to Rome, Elizabeth was the only impediment to returning England to Catholicism, as the Pope's agents had conducted a survey in 1567 indicating that fifty-two percent of English citizens identified themselves as Catholics or Catholic sympathizers, while only fifteen percent identified themselves as fervent Protestants (Greenblatt, 92). This information reinforces my claim that England was experiencing a crisis of religious identity at the time of Shakespeare's upbringing that likely would have affected his own religious experience.

In addition to his country being religiously broken during Shakespeare's upbringing, his family was plagued by religious confusion as well. Stratford, the city in which Shakespeare was born and raised, was nominally Protestant at the time of Shakespeare's birth and experienced this religious tension along with the rest of the country (Greenblatt, 93). John Shakespeare, Will's father, was outwardly a staunch Protestant Chamberlain who oversaw much iconoclasm in Stratford.⁴ However, documents from the time suggest that Will's mother was a Catholic and that John Shakespeare himself had Catholic leanings and tendencies (Greenblatt, 101).⁵ There are numerous examples suggesting Shakespeare's possible Catholic associations: two out of three of his teachers at Stratford's grammar school were Catholic and the communion rolls of the Church of England parish in Southwark reveal that Shakespeare did not take communion there during his working years (Beauregard, 159). I argue, therefore, that Shakespeare experienced internal anxiety about these disparate religious beliefs, as reflective of his time period, and manifested

⁴ Around the time of Will Shakespeare's birth, Chamberlain John Shakespeare oversaw the "repairs" of Stratford's fine Guild Chapel, which meant he paid workers to whitewash medieval paintings of St. Helena and the Finding of the Cross, St. George and the Dragon, the murder of St. Thomas Becket, and the Day of Judgment (Greenblatt, 94/95).

⁵ A "spiritual testament" was found in the house the Shakespeares were thought to have lived in by a bricklayer in the 18th century. This document linked John Shakespeare's name with Catholics and Catholic sympathizers during the exact same time as his adamant Protestant iconoclasm (Greenblatt, 101/102).

this anxiety through his use of the Boethian levels of music. I will take the critical approach of analyzing the relationship between the *musica instrumentalis*, *musica humana*, and *musica mundana* to evaluate *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest* and argue that Shakespeare used his plays to explore his own religious beliefs and subtly subvert expected cultural religious norms.⁶

II. Catholic Consonance in Hamlet

One of Shakespeare's first great tragedies, *Hamlet* was written presumably between 1600 and 1601. Although revolutionary in myriad ways, *Hamlet* takes the classic form of a revenge tragedy. Hamlet's father's ghost approaches Hamlet and orders him to avenge his murder by similarly murdering the man responsible, his stepfather Claudius. By analyzing the relationship between the literal and metaphoric music in *Hamlet*, I believe Shakespeare depicts a consonant universe in which justice is achieved and a benevolent deity is omnipotent. By killing his brother, Claudius infused this consonant universe with discord, creating "something rotten in the state of Denmark" (*Hamlet*, I.iv.89). Erin Minear, in her article "Re-Speaking Earthly Thunder: *Hamlet's* Sonic Phantoms," explains that the action of the play eventually leads to the resolution of this dissonance and the restoration of consonance, primarily through Hamlet enacting his revenge (Minear, 89). I likewise argue that, at the play's conclusion, the dissonance brought

⁶ I use Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook* as the source for the musical selections I discuss. While scholars are unsure as to the exact tunes of many of the songs referenced in the texts, Duffin based his work on the scholarship of many others and offers the best guesses of scholars as to what the original tunes likely would have been. Some of the pieces I will discuss are almost certainly the ones that Shakespeare would have used, while others are almost a complete mystery. All of the arguments I make in this thesis are based on the understanding that nothing definite can be known about the entirety of Shakespeare's musical material.

about by Claudius's evil and deceitful action has been counter-acted and that the consonant universe has been restored.

Evidence of overarching consonance permeates the action, but is initially evident through connections to the supernatural. Hamlet's father, a ghostly apparition, comes from Purgatory, and describes his situation by saying the following:

[I am] Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away

(*Hamlet*, I.v.10-13)

This passage explicitly describes Purgatory, a place in Catholic doctrine between heaven and hell where a soul resides until, as the ghost describes, "the foul crimes done in [his or her] days of nature/Are burnt and purg'd away." By having Hamlet's father's ghost come from Purgatory, Shakespeare paints this universe as Catholic. Because Shakespeare's own religious beliefs, and the religious beliefs of his family, are ambiguous, this reference to Catholicism can be understood as an honest manifestation of faith (Greenblatt, 101). Greenblatt, in his book *Will in the World*, provides evidence that Shakespeare's family had Catholic sympathies, and therefore I find it logical to assume that Shakespeare himself was somewhat sympathetic to the religion. This explicit reference to a religion advocating for supernatural, harmonious order promulgates divine harmony from the beginning of the action.

Additionally, and importantly, evidence supporting consonance arises through the retribution received by each of the characters who commits a wrongdoing. Gertrude acts lustfully and hastily marries Claudius after her husband's death, thereby earning her punishment of being accidentally poisoned by Claudius. Laertes conspired with Claudius to soak the blade of his sword in poison, ensuring Hamlet's death through trickery, thereby earning his own death

because of his deceit. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, even, suffer death for their willingness to conspire against Hamlet and through aligning themselves with Claudius. Even Hamlet accidentally murders Polonius, and therefore receives punishment as well. Sarah Gates argues that Hamlet's murder of Polonius, in addition to his killing of Laertes and his plotting against Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, makes his death warranted, and therefore I see it as needed to restore consonance to this universe (Gates, 235). All of these characters are in some way guilty of wrongdoing, and therefore they all suffer consequences, restoring a natural balance to this consonant cosmos. Ophelia, however, complicates this somewhat reductive approach, appearing as a victim who dies unnecessarily. Also the most musical character in the play, the vast majority of the *musica instrumentalis* in the text comes from Ophelia, particularly through her mad rantings. I will speak to Ophelia's unique role in this approach, her active fight to achieve her own justice, and the role she plays in understanding the justice of the world at large.

Although I find *Hamlet* to be a generally consonant play, some critics have found the musical evidence in *Hamlet* to support an overarching dissonance. In "Re-Speaking Earthly Thunder: *Hamlet's* Sonic Phantoms," a chapter of her book *Reverberating Song in Milton and Shakespeare*, Erin Minear argues that *Hamlet* is dissonant through its musical connections to a ghostly otherworld.

The 'music' of the play hints at a cosmos that is either unimaginably implacable and alien or else emptied of everything but echoes. Some entirely incomprehensible higher power presides over this universe—or else such a power is a mere illusion, a projection of an equally incomprehensible and uncomprehending humanity...Music in *Hamlet* retains its otherworldly associations, but it no longer serves as a symbol of divine harmony; it becomes instead a ghostly manifestation.

(Minear, 92)

I disagree with Minear on this point and believe that the musical evidence points to a world of cosmic consonance and divine harmony. Because the ghost of Hamlet's father comes from

Purgatory, I see him as explicit evidence of Catholicism infiltrating the text. Additionally, the association between the gravedigger and music, given his textually evidenced religious fervor, serves as a connecting agent between *musica instrumentalis* and consonant *musica mundana*. Therefore, I believe the musical evidence, in regards to supernatural elements, points to overarching consonance for the world of *Hamlet*.

In addition to Ophelia, the other predominant musical character in *Hamlet* is the gravedigger. I will begin by discussing the musical role of the gravedigger in Act V Scene i, and then will go more deeply into investigating the unique role of Ophelia. In addition to being significant purely by being musical, the gravedigger also serves as a manifestation of religion. Act V Scene i begins with the gravedigger engaging in a debate with another gravedigger over whether or not Ophelia deserves a Christian burial because of her apparent suicide. He asks “is she to be buried in Christian burial when she willfully seeks her own salvation,” to which the other gravedigger responds “I tell thee she is. Therefore make her grave straight” (*Hamlet*, V.i.1-4). This exchange occurs as they are digging Ophelia’s grave, and the apparent disregard for Christian order bothers the gravedigger, prompting him to ask “how can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?” (*Hamlet*, V.i.6). Acting as the mouthpiece for Christian doctrine and morality in the play, this exchange reminds the audience that Ophelia’s death and burial are apart from normal Christian practices.

Not only does this conversation solidify in the minds of the audience that Ophelia did indeed kill herself, as Gertrude’s initial explanation of the event remains vague, but it shows a sense of order that these lower class men are used to that has now been disrupted. They are accustomed to operating according to the Christian truths revealed in scripture, which condemn suicide. Paul’s 1st letter to the Corinthians states “know ye not that ye are the Temple of God,

and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the Temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the Temple of God is holy, which ye are” (*Geneva Bible*, 1 Cor.3.16-17).⁷

Therefore, Ophelia’s death at her own hand and her subsequent Christian burial defy this biblical order. The other gravedigger reveals that he believes “if this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o’ Christian burial,” strengthening the notion that “something is rotten in the state of Denmark” and that it is emanating from the royal family and the aristocracy (*Hamlet*, V.i.23-25, I.iv.89). They then go on to engage in witty repartee, criticizing the upper classes and connecting their own station to Adam, saying “there is no ancient gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers. They hold up Adam’s profession” (*Hamlet*, V.i.29-31). While not an explicitly Catholic figure, Adam is an explicitly Judeo-Christian one, and by aligning the gravedigger with this figure, Shakespeare emphasizes his place as a representation of the ordered, divine, Christian universe at work in the play.

The lyrics of the gravedigger’s song are based on the first, third, and eighth stanzas of “I Loathe that I Did Love”, written by Thomas, Lord Vaux and included in *Tottel’s Miscellany*, published in 1557 (Duffin, 212).^{8,9} The lyrics given from the play are thus:

*In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract o the time for a my behove,
O, methought there a was nothing a—meet
But age with his stealing steps*

⁷ The Geneva Bible, published in 1560, was assembled from the work of William Tyndale and was the most popular and widely read Bible until the King James Version in 1611. Therefore, it was the Geneva Bible that Shakespeare most likely would have read and been familiar with.

⁸ Thomas Lord Vaux was a 16th century British poet and contemporary of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. He is considered a “minor courtly maker” and is best known for thirteen of his poems which were published in an Elizabethan anthology known as *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* in 1576 (Rudick).

⁹ *Tottel’s Miscellany* is thought by scholars to be the most important poetic collection published in the mid-16th century. This was the first collection of Petrarchan sonnets published for an English audience, and it proved to be immensely popular (Hamrick, 329).

*Hath clawed me in his clutch,
 And hath shipped me into the land,
 As if I had never been such
 A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,
 For and a shrouding sheet:
 O, a pit of clay for to be made
 For such a guest is meet*

(*Hamlet*, V.i.61-64, 71-74, 94-97)

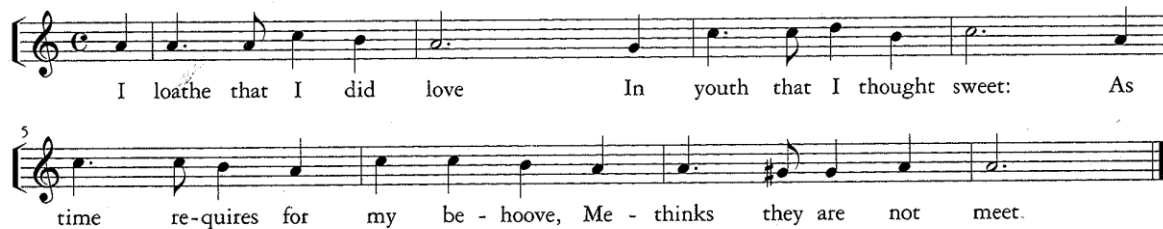


Figure 1—"I Loathe that I Did Love," from Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 211.

The traditional tune for these lyrics most often used in performance is based on an early 19th century transcription of marginalia from a now lost copy of *Tottel's Miscellany* (Duffin, 213). This traditional tune is set in the key of A Minor and begins and ends on its tonic of A. Formally, the piece is relatively consonant, being divided equally in half with two four measure phrases. There is mode mixture, however, as the midpoint of the tune ends on C, as measures three and four are written in the parallel major of C. Measures five through eight return to the original key of A minor. The only accidentals used in the piece are two G#'s, which are diatonic in the harmonic minor scale of A. In terms of word painting, at least for the first verse, this switch to the parallel major fits the more genial lyrics of "methought it was very sweet." The other two verses, however, have this phrase sung to the lyrics of "hath clawed me in his clutch" and "for and a shrouding sheet," which do not form as coherent of a musical argument for word-painting.

The gravedigger's strong religious associations, which Shakespeare depicts explicitly in the text, make his song all the more important and revealing. He begins his song immediately

upon Hamlet and Horatio's entrance and it initially seems quite out of place, as he sings romantic lyrics while engaging in the morbid act of digging a grave. The gravedigger bemoans his situation at having lost his love through death and by using both major and minor modes, the happiness of being in love and the grief felt at losing it are both expressed. He then goes on to remark about the negative aspects of time by saying "*But age with his stealing steps/Hath clawed me in his clutch*", simultaneously showing Hamlet a skull. Within the context of the action, the gravedigger's song reminds Hamlet of his own mortality. Also, because the piece is predominantly in the minor key and generally diatonic, it serves as a musical manifestation for the consonant world that the gravedigger represents. The gravedigger's somber tune reminds Hamlet of his own lost loved ones, both his father and Ophelia. By having the gravedigger sing, and by having him intermittently display a skull, Shakespeare has music serve as a connecting agent between the deaths that Hamlet has been and will be responsible for and the order of the universe to which Hamlet must eventually submit. He must go and enact justice on Claudius, likely dying himself, to restore the music to a predominantly major mode. The gravedigger, the literal manifestation of death and the textual manifestation of religion, shows an inherent connection between music and God, and therefore an inherent connection between *musica instrumentalis* and *musica mundana*.

While the gravedigger's song is thematically revealing, the majority of the *musica instrumentalis* comes from Ophelia after she has gone insane. Because all music is appreciated and understood according to the cultural context in which it is produced or heard, understanding the cultural context surrounding female music-making in the Elizabethan era helps to reveal the significance of Ophelia's musicality. For example, by the time *Hamlet* was written, playwrights frequently expressed madness in their female characters by having them sing (Winkler, 65).

Richard Braithwaite, in his 17th century work on proper etiquette, *The English Gentleman; and the English Gentlewoman: Both in One Volume Couched*, speaks to what was considered the proper mode of communication for a lady:

Nor do's she only refine the language, but she tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandsome earnestness, or loudness of Discourse...A Woman's tongue should indeed be like the imaginary Music of the Spheres, sweet and charming; but not to be heard at a distance.

(Braithwaite, 320, as quoted in Winkler, 65)

Because proper women were quiet and socially harmonious, reflective of the popular view of *musica mundana* as harmonious, women creating vocal *musica instrumentalis* were thought to have lost this sense of propriety and to therefore have possibly sunk into madness. In the Elizabethan Period, music and the feminine were closely associated because both were thought to communicate directly to a man's passions. When overstimulated, either by music, women, or both, a man would lose his rationality, the vital aspect of his masculinity, and be reduced to an overwrought, emotional, feminine state (Winkler, 7). Because of this social construct, music was often associated with madness and, particularly, with mad women. Most of the women who sang on the Elizabethan stage, also, were purported to have lost their sanity through "erotic melancholy," allowing the playwrights to infuse their crazed laments with bawdy, sexual content (Winkler, 65). Fox-Good explains that madness was therefore not thought of as a benign condition, but one that was potentially subversive, as it caused this typically marginalized group to act out of character (Fox-Good, 321). Because of this cultural milieu, Shakespeare's choice to have Ophelia sing suggests her insanity to his audience.

Similarly, the majority of the *musica instrumentalis* in *Hamlet* comes from popular Elizabethan song, inviting audience members to bring their own associations into their understanding and interpretation of the songs themselves (Gillespie and Rhodes, 184). Act IV

Scene v begins with Gertrude speaking to a Gentleman, who describes Ophelia by saying “she is importunate, Indeed distract./ Her mood will needs be pitied” (*Hamlet*, IV.v.2-3). He then goes on to remark that “her speech is nothing,” further informing the audience of Ophelia’s insanity and preparing them for her musical outbursts (*Hamlet*, IV.v.7). Bruce Johnson, in his article “*Hamlet: Voice, Music, Sound*” explains that Shakespeare exploits the shared understanding of his audience regarding the performance of popular tunes, that some subjects and genres are appropriate in certain circumstances, although not in others. When these songs are sung in their proper context, they reflect a stability and sense of order, while when they are sung out of context, they reflect a collapse of that order. Johnson therefore argues that Ophelia’s singing of these popular songs outside of their proper context reflects a dissonance in the universal order that audience members would have recognized as unsettling (Johnson, 263).

Because of Ophelia’s insanity, many critics, particularly in the Romantic era, disregarded her mental processes and evaluated her role in the action from a purely emotional place, removing her from any active part in the drama or the critical discourse (Ortiz, 56). David Ortiz, in his book *Broken Harmony, Shakespeare and the Politics of Music*, however, takes a different approach, arguing that Shakespeare intended Ophelia to play a more active role in the drama than as a mere musical image (Ortiz, 50). Sarah Gates, in her article *Assembling the Ophelia Fragments: Gender, Genre, and Revenge in Hamlet*, and Jacquelyn Fox-Good, in *Ophelia’s Mad Songs: Music, Gender, and Power*, argue similarly. Going further, however, they both state that Ophelia’s musical outbursts serve to connect her own revenge for the injustices committed against her to the revenge that Hamlet must enact against Claudius. Gates also posits that Ophelia’s life and death are reflections of Hamlet’s same experience: she truly goes mad, whereas Hamlet feigns madness, and she truly commits suicide, while he contemplates it. She

becomes a sort of double for Hamlet, following through on his desires (Fox-Good, 223). I believe that instead of serving as a double, however, Ophelia serves as an outlier to this otherwise consonant world, and Shakespeare will repeat this form of incorporating a musical outlier in other plays.

I see Ophelia's role in the critical discourse and in the consonant world of the play as that of the outsider. The one character removed from the consonant workings of the universe, she reflects the possible doubt that Shakespeare feels about the validity of an omnipotent, Catholic deity. This approach is supported in many ways by other critics, as many critics today, including Ortiz and Gates, see Ophelia's songs as potentially threatening to the social order and therefore socially discordant. The lyrics of the tunes and, in some cases, the tunes themselves, are frequently subversive and provocative. Ortiz argues that "Shakespeare's choice of songs, in particular, encourages his audience to associate freely, imagining other Ophelias than the 'pretty' one prescribed by Claudius" (Ortiz, 50). I largely agree with this point, in that I do see Ophelia's singing and the particular songs she sings, which will be discussed subsequently, as reflecting a power and strength not typically given to the character in Romantic depictions.

I argue that Ophelia's musical dissonance and status as an outlier stem from her defiance of the punishment she receives from this just world and her taking charge of her own fate. While many critics have seen Ophelia as a merely pathogenic character, others argue that Ophelia is, in fact, guilty of sin because of her presumed premarital sexual relations with Hamlet. When Hamlet feigns madness in Act II Scene iii, he engages Ophelia in explicitly sexual language:

HAMLET: *Lady, shall I lie in your lap?*

OPHELIA: *No, my lord*

HAMLET: *I mean, my head upon your lap?*

OPHELIA: *Ay, my lord*

HAMLET: *Do you think I meant country matters?*

OPHELIA: *I think nothing, my lord*

HAMLET: *That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.*

(*Hamlet*, III.ii.112-119)

These lines, combined with the sexual content of Ophelia's songs and the reference Ophelia makes in Act II to Hamlet approaching her dressed in a disordered fashion, signify a sexual nature to their relationship. While critics have argued about the validity of that relationship, I believe that it did, in fact, occur and therefore colors the rest of the action.

Ortiz reveals that, because of her sexual indiscretions, it is possible to view Ophelia through the lens of feminine sexual guilt, which pushes her towards insanity and provides coherence to the sexual rantings in her songs (Ortiz, 63). According to this view, Ophelia would then deserve her suffering just like the rest of the guilty characters. In some fashion, I believe this to be true. Because Ophelia has defied traditional Catholic convention by engaging in premarital sexual relations, the consonant, just, and ordered universe punished her through Hamlet's abandonment and her father's death. Unlike the other characters who receive punishment for wrongdoings, however, Ophelia does not accept it quietly; she engages in subversive song and eventually rebels against it by committing suicide. Whereas all of the other guilty characters die at the hands of another, Ophelia dies at her own hand, signifying her own active part in her decision and therefore her own active part in her revenge. I believe that her insanity makes it socially and culturally possible for her to show her change from a woman who accepts her fate to a woman taking charge of it, resulting in her suicide.

I will now analyze the musical material present in Ophelia's songs and show how much of it is subversive, providing her with the cultural dissonance necessary to allow the foreshadowing of her revenge to be affective. Ophelia sings parts of many different songs, and the ones that will be evaluated are referenced in sequence as follows: "How Should I Your True Love Know," "Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day," "For Bonny Sweet Robin is all my Joy",

and “And Will He Not Come Again?” (Gillespie and Rhodes, 185). The exact melodies are unknown and are maintained predominantly through tradition, as they were recalled by 18th century actresses who had played Ophelia and were then written down in the 19th century at the Drury Lane Theatre (Fox-Good, 220).¹⁰

The melody for “How Should I Your True Love Know” did not occur in print until the 19th century, but it has been fairly well established that the 19th century version of the tune did derive from Elizabethan sources (Sternfeld, 60). When the Drury-Lane Theatre was destroyed by fire in 1812, Charles Knight, author of *Pictorial Edition of Shakespeare*, claims that the oral tradition of the tune was preserved, although the records were lost (Sternfeld, 60). Actress would teach actress, allowing the melody to continue on through history. This song derives its melody from a popular 16th century tune entitled “Walsingham” (Fox-Good, 220). The setting follows a traditional ballad style, giving the actor or actress playing Ophelia freedom of interpretation through its simplicity (Ortiz, 60). The ballad form was a favorite of Shakespeare, both because it was so popular and it offered him a plethora of material, but also because the simple form gave multiple possible meanings and interpretations to the lyrics in performance, as evidenced through the various, disparate ballads sung by Ophelia (Buhler, 160).

The lyrics of “How Should I Your True Love Know” are thus:

*How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon*

(Hamlet, IV.v. 23-26)

¹⁰ The Drury Lane Theatre, also known as the Theatre Royal, opened in 1663. It was issued by Royal Patent by King Charles II and it, along with the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, were the only places where serious drama was allowed to be performed. The theatre burned down in 1672, re-opened in 1674, and then burned again in 1794, under the management of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The theatre is particularly renowned for the work of David Garrick, who operated the theatre from 1747 to 1767 (Cooper, 36).

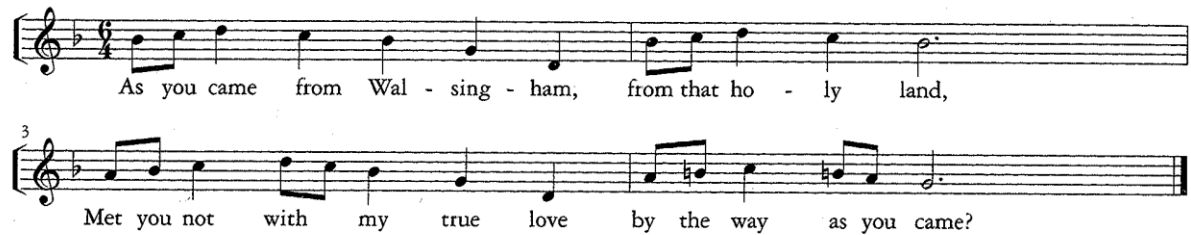


Figure 2—“Walsingham” (the tune of “How Should I Your True Love Know”) from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 422.

This version of the tune begins in G Minor and modulates in the last measure to G Major. This melodic shift seems quite unexpected, as the first three measures are solidly in G minor and employ no chromaticism. The phrases “how should I your true love know” and “by his cockle hat, and staff” are sung on almost the same melody and are securely in this tonality. The addition of chromaticism in the final measure through the use of B naturals, however, creates the modulation and mode mixture and makes this piece jarring and dissonant. Additionally, the melodic and harmonic contour of the tune creates a haunting, sad quality, which reflects the meaning of the lyrics and contrasts the fairly steady background of the simple, repetitive rhythm (Fox-Good, 225). The melody’s descent and the firmly minor modality express Ophelia’s emotions: “the shape of a human life, with its curve toward death, and with the literal movement of the body into the grave” (Fox-Good, 226). In this instance, the musical evidence points to discord; the piece begins seeming simple and lilting, yet ends in an unexpected fashion, promulgating Ophelia’s subversive, dissonant, musical role.

The Drury Lane Theatre tradition favors a melody for “Saint Valentine’s Day” that was used in several ballad operas of the early 18th century. This tune is quite similar to an older tune called “Soldier’s Life” that, although not printed until 1651, was commonly referenced by playwrights and ballad writers of Shakespeare’s era (Sternfeld, 63). The lyrics that Shakespeare included are thus:

*Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day,
 All in the morning betime,
 And I a maid at your window,
 To be your Valentine,
 Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,
 And dugged the chamber door.
 Let in the maid that out a maid
 Never departed more.
 By Gis and by Saint Charity,
 Alack and fie for shame!
 Young men will do't if they come to't,
 By Cock, they are to blame.
 Quoth she, Before you tumbled me,
 You promis'd me to wed.*

(*Hamlet*, IV.v.48-55, 58-63)

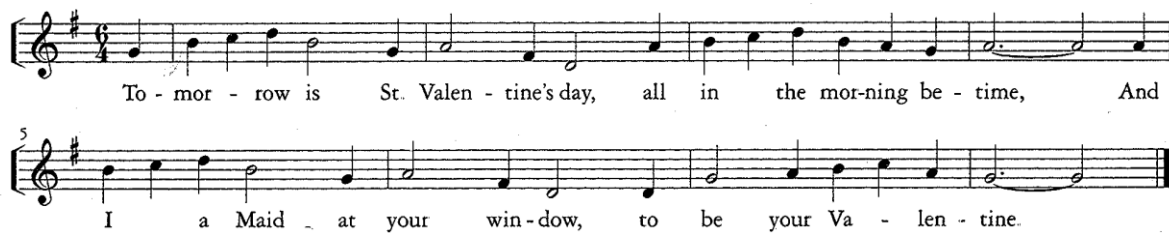


Figure 3—“Tomorrow is St. Valentine’s Day,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 407.

This version of the tune is written in G Major and employs no chromaticism in its melodic lines. Fox-Good argues that when listening to the tune, there is an undeniable sense of up and down motion, generating a rhythm of opening and closing. This feeling is created by the harmonic rhythm, articulated at cadential moments by essentially alternating between two implied chords, a fifth apart (Fox-Good, 227). She also believes that the motion comes from the 6 beat measures and the equal note values of the melody, which push the melody forward. I argue that because of this rhythmic simplicity and the effect created by the harmonic motion, as articulated by Fox-Good, the piece seems simple, reflective of Ophelia’s innocence and naivety. While “How Should I Your True Love Know” depicts Ophelia’s subversive musical mission, the simple form and melody of this piece serve to emphasize and clarify her subversive lyrics.

Unlike “How Should I your True Love Know,” the lyrics to “Saint Valentine’s Day” are overtly sexual. Lyrics like “*Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,/And dupp’d the chamber door./Let in the maid that out a maid/Never departed more,*” and “*Quoth she, Before you tumbled me,/You promis’d me to wed*” add evidence to my argument that Ophelia and Hamlet engaged in premarital sexual relations. Because Polonius has just been killed, and this, along with Hamlet’s abandonment, have likely led to her insanity, some critics, as Ortiz presented, have interpreted her sexual ravings as a form of sexual feminine guilt. Once Hamlet abandons her, Ophelia bemoans her situation:

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
 That sucked the honey of his music vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
 That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
 Blasted with ecstasy. Oh, woe is me,
 T’ have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

(*Hamlet*, III.i.155-160)

This passage suggests that Ophelia had viewed their relationship as musically harmonious, as she describes herself as “suck[ing] the honey of his music vows” and now describes their sound as “out of tune and harsh.” However, phrases like “sucked the honey” and “blasted with ecstasy” also connote eroticism and suggest that there was a sexual element to Hamlet and Ophelia’s relationship. Ortiz argues that if she had engaged in premarital relations, her insanity could come from a place of extreme remorse for dishonoring her dead father and distant brother (Ortiz, 63).

While I agree that feminine sexual guilt plays a role in Ophelia’s circumstances, I also believe that Shakespeare intended his audiences to sympathize with Ophelia. Throughout the course of the play, he depicts her as a supremely sympathetic character, the source of many of the Romantic interpretations of her as pathetic. Therefore, I understand these explicit sexual

references as a means of feminine musical expression. Her societal constructs forbid her from speaking of these sexual matters as a sane woman, and they therefore find a voice through her insanity. Singing about these topics was surely dissonant socially, both to Claudius and Gertrude and to the Elizabethan audiences witnessing the play. I see this dissonance, however, as the only means possible for Ophelia to express the wrongs committed against her. She proclaims her premarital sexual experiences, upsetting Claudius and Gertrude, but appearing sympathetic to the audience. Ophelia has already suffered because of her sexual indiscretions: the abandonment of a brother, the refusal of a lover, and the loss of a father. Therefore, within this Catholic universe, I see Ophelia's expressions of sexual experiences both as a plea for forgiveness and sympathy from the audience and as foreshadowing of her plans for revenge.

Also, because she is such a sympathetic character, Shakespeare could be using Ophelia to question the kind of justice issued by this benevolent deity. Ophelia has defied Catholic law by having premarital sexual relations and therefore, according to this consonant, ordered universe, she is worthy of both punishment and scorn. Shakespeare's depiction of Ophelia, however, paints a very different picture. The scene opens with the Gentleman reporting to Gertrude that "she [Ophelia] is importunate,/Indeed distract. Her mood will needs be pitied" (*Hamlet*, IV.v. 2-3). From the beginning of the scene, Shakespeare tells us that we are to sympathize with Ophelia, not criticize her. Because of Ophelia's actions, actions done to Ophelia, Shakespeare's depiction, and Ophelia's ultimate demise, I believe Shakespeare uses Ophelia as an exception to his otherwise consonant universe. As a playwright battling with religious ambivalence, the worlds he creates are seldom simple and perfect; they reflect his own confusion and questioning. Ophelia undergoes a similar questioning of the validity of her punishment and the morality of this universe and therefore decides to exert her own power by killing herself.

I will now continue to evaluate Ophelia's *musica instrumentalis* and demonstrate how it follows in a similar vein of subversion. Unfortunately, there is no Elizabethan music known for "Bonny Sweet Robin is All My Joy," which Shakespeare includes as thus:

*They bore him barefaced on the bier,
Hey, non nonny, nonny, hey, nonny,
And in his grave rained many a tear...
For Bonny Sweet Robin is all my joy*

(*Hamlet*, IV.v, 164-167, 187)

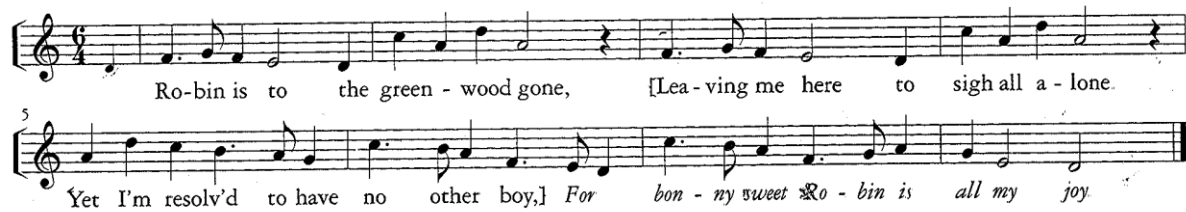


Figure 4—"For Bonny Sweet Robin is All My Joy," from Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 72.

Traditionally, these lyrics are sung to this tune, which is an adaptation of the "Walsingham" tune, although the tune for "And Will He Not Come Again" has been used occasionally as well (Sternfeld, 67). The traditional tune for "And He Will Not Come Again" is recorded in Charles Knight's *Pictorial Shakespeare*, based again on the Drury Lane Tradition.

The lyrics for that tune are thus:

*And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy deathbed.
He will never come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll.
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan,
God ha' mercy on his soul.—*

(*Hamlet*, IV.v, 190-199)

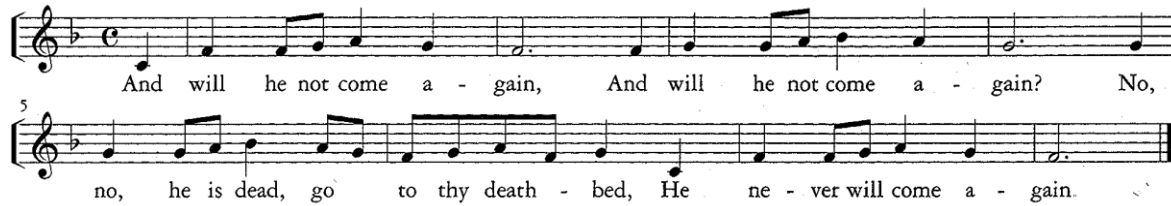


Figure 5—“And Will He Not Come Again,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 52.

The melody for these lyrics sounds like a variant on the tune entitled “The Merry Milkmaids,” which was printed in 1651 in John Playford’s *English Dancing Master* (Sternfeld, 67).¹¹ As has already been discussed, the “Walsingham” tune, also the tune of “How Should I Your True Love Know,” is melodically discordant. If the lyrics of “Bonny Sweet Robin is all my Joy” were sung to this tune, as tradition tends to suggest, this would serve to connect these two sets of lyrics, setting up a contrast between the questions asked in “How Should I Your True Love Know” and the answers given in ‘Bonny Sweet Robin is All My Joy.’ “How should I your true love know, from another one” is responded to with “and in his grave rained many a tear,” showing the transitory nature of life and love. Also, the harmonic instability present in this tune was regarded in the Renaissance as a means of expressing emotional effect and was often employed in the madrigals of well-renowned composers like Thomas Morley and Thomas Weelkes (Fox-Good, 229).¹² It also could portray the meaning of the text, as the refrain “hey nonny” was a frequent substitute for obscenities in early 17th century music (Sternfeld, 89). If

¹¹ John Playford’s *English Dancing Master*, published in 1651, is the single most important collection of English country dances from before the 19th century. Many of the dances came from theatrical performances and masques from the pre-English Civil War era (Whitlock, 548).

¹² Thomas Morley (1557-1602) was the most influential English composer of Italian madrigals in the Elizabethan era. Although madrigal music continued to be popular in England well after Morley’s death, it appears that Morley was the one who really whetted the public’s interest for the genre and who successfully translated it from Italian into English (Philip Brett and Tessa Murray). Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623) followed in the tradition of Morley and was a very gifted madrigalist. He was also a very important composer of English church music (Brown, “Weelkes, Thomas”).

the “Walsingham” tune were the original melody, Shakespeare would be using straightforward, aural dissonance to support the dissonance in the scene.

If, however, “Bonny Sweet Robin is All My Joy” was set to the tune typically associated with “And Will He Not Come Again,” Shakespeare could possibly be creating a jarring juxtaposition between formally and melodically consonant music with dolorous, discordant lyrics. This melody is recorded in F major and employs no chromaticism. The phrases “and will he come again” and “he will never come again” are sung on the same melody, providing continuity and an answer to the question asked in the first instance. This tune, like “Tomorrow is Saint Valentine’s Day,” is simple, allowing the focus to remain on the dissonant, subversive lyrics. If the “And Will He Not Come Again” tune were the original melody, Shakespeare could be highlighting the text and creating an unsettling juxtaposition to support the dissonance in the scene. The musical questions surrounding “Bonny Sweet Robin is All My Joy” demonstrate myriad nuances of argument that can be made in regards to Shakespeare’s use and intention of music.

The *musica humana* reflects Ophelia’s dissonant position as well. By the end of the play, Ophelia’s soul is out of tune with the universe, as seen through her insanity and her suicide. She is likewise out of tune in her relationships to other characters. In Act II Scene i, Ophelia describes Hamlet’s crazed actions towards her, to which Polonius responds “this is the very ecstasy of love” (*Hamlet*, II.i.99). At this instance, Polonius believes and hopes that it is Hamlet’s love for Ophelia that has driven him to his wild state, implying a desired future marriage between them. Sarah Gates explains that if this was the case, Ophelia’s body would therefore become the vessel through which the future heir of Denmark would be produced (Gates, 231). That vessel then must remain pure and Ophelia has a responsibility and a duty to

protect herself. Presumably, however, Hamlet and Ophelia have already had sexual relations, and therefore justice acts against Ophelia, causing her to suffer. Hamlet becomes a banished murderer, her father is killed, and her brother essentially abandons her. Left seemingly alone, Ophelia has no way to rebel against what she sees as an unjust world but to harm that vessel, to “destroy the one thing that has value because the men must stake their patrimony upon it” (Gates, 231).

From this perspective, her suicide becomes not a passive act of weakness, but a strong act of rebellion. In Act V scene i, Gertrude laments Ophelia’s passing, saying “I had hoped thou wouldst have been my Hamlet’s wife” (*Hamlet*, V.i.243). This statement demonstrates the presumed political arrangement that was to be formed through their intended union. In this instance, the more passive act would have been for Ophelia to remain alive and miserable, suffering the just punishment she received for her sin. By taking her own life, however, she refuses to be a part of this system that she believes has so wronged her.

As evidenced through scriptural references, Christianity broadly, but Catholicism specifically, views suicide as a mortal sin. By killing herself, Ophelia appears as the most rebellious and defiant character in the play, the only one who questions and resists his or her punishment. Through Ophelia, Shakespeare can possibly be raising elements of religious doubt within his otherwise Catholic universe. Even though justice does exist in *Hamlet*, Ophelia raises the question of whether or not that justice is truly just and whether or not one should enact one’s own volition to fight against it. By making Ophelia such a sympathetic character and by having both the audience and the characters in the play mourn her passing, Shakespeare invites his audience to question whether she deserved her punishment and whether she was sinning or acting valiantly in seeking her own demise.

The musical material paints the world of *Hamlet* as a logical, rational, and ordered place. Characters that commit a wrongdoing are punished and are unable to escape their consequences. Claudius caused damage to this consonant universe by murdering his brother, but that consonance is eventually restored, symbolized through the deaths of the guilty characters and the survival of Horatio and Fortinbras. The supernatural connections in the play are also explicitly religious and some specifically reference Catholicism, a religion to which Shakespeare would likely have been sympathetic and one that advocates for an omnipotent, just deity. Ophelia, however, serves as Shakespeare's exception to his depiction of a consonant, Catholic universe. The audience is invited to question whether or not Ophelia deserved her fate and her suicide provides an example of someone not willing to submit to justice, calling into question whether or not this consonant, just universe is actually just at all. The consequence of such a reading offers that Shakespeare does perhaps accord some merit and validity to the Catholic faith, but even still, he cannot commit to it entirely. The larger world of *Hamlet* suggests Shakespeare's Catholic, and more generally, religious, sympathies, while still showing him hesitant to truly devote himself to a religious worldview.

III. Nihilistic Dissonance in *Othello*

Othello, written presumably in 1604, follows *Hamlet* as another of Shakespeare's great tragedies. Unlike *Hamlet*, however, the universe of *Othello* is profoundly discordant. The *musica mundana* suggests a world without justice, evidenced textually in Act III Scene i in a discussion between the Clown and the Musicians.

CLOWN: But, masters, here's money for you, and the general so likes your music that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

MUSICIAN: Well, sir, we will not.

CLOWN: If you have any music that may not be heard, to 't again. But, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

MUSICIAN: We have none such, sir.

CLOWN: Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away. Go, vanish into air, away!
(*Othello*, III.i.11-20)

The Clown remarks that “the general,” or Othello, desires to hear “music that may not be heard,” and several critics, including Erin Minear, recognize this to be an explicit reference to the *musica mundana* (Minear, “Music and the Crisis of Meaning in *Othello*, 363).¹³ Othello desires harmony in his universe and wants aural music from the musicians to reflect it. However, the musicians respond with “we have none such, sir,” implying that the universal order that Othello seeks in his world in Cyprus is non-existent, resulting in silence. Erin Minear offers that if the *musica mundana* in *Othello* is silence, then Shakespeare’s world either has no connection between the *musica instrumentalis* and the *musica mundana*, or there is no harmonious cosmic order and chaos reigns supreme (Minear, 364). I believe that within the context of the play, and in conjunction with other elements of discord displayed in the text, Shakespeare uses the musician’s statement to convey his chaotic cosmos.

The final scene most clearly demonstrates this lack of universal justice; innocent characters are killed and guilty characters do not receive appropriate retribution. The genre of tragedy is characterized by having the tragic action brought about by some discord that has infused an otherwise consonant universe and by ending with a sense of catharsis achieved when consonance is restored. Many tragedies work according to these guidelines, including *Hamlet*, as I articulated previously. In *Othello*, however, this catharsis is never achieved, because Desdemona, Othello, and Emilia die, but Iago survives and receives no proper consequences for

¹³ One such critic is Lawrence J. Ross. In “Shakespeare’s ‘Dull Clown’ and Symbolic Music,” Ross sees the line “we have none such, sir” as textual evidence of a conflict between the literal music and the music of the spheres (as quoted in Minear, 363).

his malevolence. At the end of Act V Scene ii, Othello finally understands that Desdemona was never unfaithful to him and cries out to Desdemona's dead body, saying "cold, cold, my girl,/ Even like thy chastity" (*Othello*, V.ii.275-276). Although Othello tries to kill Iago, Iago survives and responds with "I bleed, sir, but not killed" (*Othello*, V.ii.288). Agonizing, Othello pleads to know why Iago would cause such destruction, to which Iago replies "demand me nothing. What you know, you know./ From this time forth I will never speak a word" (*Othello*, V.ii.303-304). This distressing scene seems thoroughly discordant, as the justice that an audience would desire and expect never comes to fruition.

To Elizabethans, who overwhelmingly believe in a worldview controlled by a benevolent Creator, this obvious lack of justice elicited uncomfortable questioning of accepted beliefs about the consequences of human action; early criticism of the play reflects this discomfort. Thomas Rymer, in his late 17th century work "A Bloody Farce," expresses the unsettling feeling experienced by Elizabethan audiences:

What can remain with the audience to carry home with them from this sort of poetry for their use and edification? How can it work (instead of settling the mind and purging our passion) to delude our sense, disorder our thoughts, addle our brain, pervert our affections, hair our imaginations, corrupt our appetite, and fill our head with vanity, confusion...

(Rymer, 210)

Rymer argues that *Othello* lacks as a tragedy precisely because it withholds the sense of catharsis and didacticism typically associated with the genre. I believe that this withholding was Shakespeare's attempt to disturb his audience and force them to question their assumed beliefs.

The aurally musical material in *Othello* reflects this world of dissonance and chaos as well. In terms of *musica instrumentalis*, the most notable and famous song in the play is "The Willow Song," sung by Desdemona in Act IV Scene iii. After being publicly insulted and struck by Othello, Desdemona speaks privately to her maid, Emilia, in her bedroom, bemoaning her

situation and speaking about her mother's maid, Barbary. She says that Barbary "was in love, and he she loved proved mad/And did forsake her. She had a song of 'Willow,'/An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune/And she died singing it" (*Othello*, IV.iii.27-30). She then reveals "that song tonight/Will not go from my mind," foreshadowing her own demise at Othello's hand. The lyrics she sings are thus:

*The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones
Sing willow—
Lay by these—
Willow, willow—
Prithee, hie thee, he'll come anon—
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve---
Nay, that's not next*

(*Othello*, IV.iii.40-53)

The poor soul sat sigh-ing by a sy-ca-more tree, Sing wil-low, willow, wil-low; With his
hand in his bo-som, and his head u-pon his knee, O willow, willow, willow, wil-low, O
willow, willow, willow, wil-low shall be my gar-land. Sing all a green wil-low,
wil-low, willow, wil-low. Aye me, the green wil-low must be my gar-land.

Figure 6—"The Willow Song" from Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York: W, W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 470.

There are three common tunes purported to be the melody that Shakespeare employed in his original production of *Othello*, contained in the following manuscripts: British Museum Add. MS 15117 (1616 or earlier), also known as the London Book, the Lodge Book (early 1570s), and the Dallis Book (ca. 1583) (Sternfeld, 32).¹⁴ While it is impossible to say with absolute certainty which manuscript version was the original, the London Book version is undoubtedly the most famous (Winkler, 74). This version is the most likely candidate because the lyrics found in the manuscript are similar enough to Shakespeare's own that scholars assume the playwright was familiar with the tune (Winkler, 74). Apart from its musical and textual appropriateness, this composition fits chronologically as well, as the London Book manuscript contains many songs that were popular in the early 17th century. Written in various hands, the manuscript includes popular songs from Jonson's *Volpone* as well as tunes from Byrd and Tallis.¹⁵ Because these other tunes were so popular and this version of "The Willow Song" is included, many scholars believe that this tune was equally as popular, making it even more of a likely candidate for inclusion given Shakespeare's history of and propensity for making use of popular melodies (Sternfeld, 35).

Because the London Book version is the most probable option for the original tune, scholars make assertions about its melodic content in relation to the play in its entirety. Written in D Minor, the overall harmonic structure reflects a mournful, dolorous quality that befits both

¹⁴ The Lodge Book version, unlike the London Book version, is purely instrumental, containing only a lute solo, and the performer must make the lyrics fit the melody. It is now in the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. The Dallis Book consists of two portions, the Dublin Virginal Manuscript, compiled in 1570, and the lute book of Dallis, dated 1583. It contains a lute tablature with a melody so similar to the London Book version that many consider it to be a variant. It is now housed in the library of Trinity College, Dublin (Sternfeld, 36/37).

¹⁵ William Byrd was a popular early Elizabethan composer, composing mainly madrigals, motets, and ballads. He is known especially for his skill at employing musical form and structure (Kerman). Thomas Tallis was also a popular early Elizabethan composer and his work includes almost every genre used in the English church in the 16th century (Doe and Allinson).

the text and Desdemona's tragic state. Melodically, the refrain frequently starts on a high note before rapidly moving downward, the melodic trajectory simulating her tears (Winkler, 74). Crucially, these sections of downward motion are also harmonically distinct from the rest of the piece. While the majority of the melody is in D Minor, these two long downward moving sections, both on the lyrics "willow, willow, willow, willow," each have at least one instance of chromaticism. On the first run, the sixth of the scale degree is sharpened, playing with mode mixture by alluding to the D Major key. However, the transformation to the major mode is not complete, as the third scale degree is still sung natural, creating mode confusion. In the context of the piece, this is an unsettling occurrence, as the audience's ear is solidly in the minor mode at this instance. The second run, however, makes the mode mixture complete by sharpening the seventh, sixth, and third scale degrees. After this motion, the audience's ear is almost adapted to D Major, yet the melody reverts immediately to the minor mode with the natural third scale degree once again for the phrase "shall be my garland."

These instances of mode mixture create a sense of harmonic uncertainty and this unnerving musical motion echoes the overall discord of *Othello*. This piece is not a simple, harmonious melody, but one that demonstrates confusion and unease. Desdemona, also, does not sing this song in its entirety chronologically, but in a fragmentary manner, missing lyrics and including additional lines such as "lay by these" and "prithee, hie thee, he'll come anon." These additions support the preexisting dissonance by making the end of the performance an unorganized conglomeration of thought. Importantly, the second to last line that Desdemona speaks, "let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve" is not recorded in the London Book version, making it an active addition on Shakespeare's part, complicating Desdemona's status of innocence. Immediately after, however, Desdemona remarks "nay, that's not next" questioning

her previous comment and creating even more textual and musical confusion (*Othello*, IV.iii.53). The ending effect is thematically dissonant, and both the lyrics Desdemona sings and the underlying melody reflect this discord.

Notably, Emilia, Desdemona's hand-maid, refers to Desdemona's performance and sings a line from "The Willow Song" as she dies. When it becomes apparent that Desdemona was innocent and Iago intentionally deceived Othello, Emilia speaks out against her husband, provoking him to murder her. Her last words are as follows:

What did thy song bode, lady?
 Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.
 And die in music.
 (*singing*) Willow, willow, willow—
 Moor, she was chaste, she lov'd thee, cruel Moor.
 So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.
 So speaking as I think, alas, I die.

(*Othello*, V.ii.247-251)

Emilia sings the dissonant, descending "Willow, willow, willow" phrase presumably on Desdemona's same melody. In this instance, the phrase is particularly poignant, as the audience hears it while witnessing the death of an innocent character at the hand of a villain. Also, since Emilia's death is so obviously unjust, Emilia's singing of this line serves as a connecting reference to Desdemona, further solidifying Desdemona's innocence and her own discordant death.

The *musica instrumentalis* supports the *musica humana* in emphasizing the discordant relationships between the characters and the differing internal states of the characters themselves. In addition to the song itself, the situation surrounding Desdemona's singing could have been interpreted as dissonant by an Elizabethan audience. Within the cultural context of music and the feminine discussed earlier in regards to Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Desdemona's singing would have likely caused Elizabethan audiences to assume that Desdemona was losing her grip on reality.

Within the context of the play, however, this is obviously not true. Desdemona, the singing woman, is one of the only characters that maintains her sanity and judgment, or a balanced personal *musica humana*. In Act IV Scene i, when Desdemona first approaches Othello after Iago has successfully convinced him of Desdemona's guilt, they have the following interaction:

OTHELLO: I am glad to see you mad
 DESDEMONA: Why, sweet Othello—
 OTHELLO: (*striking her*) Devil!
 DESDEMONA: I have not deserved this.

(*Othello*, IV.i.238-241)

After being struck by Othello, Desdemona demonstrates her sanity through acknowledging that she does not deserve such treatment. Also, Iago's soliloquies, in which he expresses his malicious intentions, clearly allude to Desdemona's innocence. In Act II Scene iii, Iago speaks to his plot, saying "so will I turn her virtue into pitch/And out of her own goodness make the net/That shall enmesh them all" (*Othello*, II.iii.360-362). Between Desdemona's reactions and Iago's statements, Shakespeare illustrates Desdemona's control of her mental state and her full awareness of her innocence. Likewise, Emilia's singing of the "Willow, willow, willow, willow" line from "The Willow Song" would have been disorienting for an Elizabethan audience, as she is also notably sane. She reveals that it was she that gave Iago the handkerchief, a fact the audience would have known to be true from witnessing the action of the play, and therefore her sanity is verified. Witnessing cogent Desdemona's intimate, musical moment and Emilia singing at her undeserved death would have been confusing and unsettling experiences for audience members, violating the preconceived understanding of the relationship between music and the feminine.

The violation of preconceived Elizabethan notions is a recurrent theme in the text, evident from the outset. The play begins with Iago and Roderigo revealing to Brabantio,

Desdemona's father, that his daughter has betrayed him and married Othello, a Moor, which Elizabethan audiences would have considered thoroughly scandalous. In revealing this information, Iago emphasizes their racial differences and speaks in sexual language, saying "even now, now, very now, an old black ram/is tugging your white ewe" (*Othello*, I.i.88-89). Brabantio becomes outraged, not only that his daughter has married a Moor, but that she has done so without his permission. Desdemona has broken two firmly entrenched social constructs by doing so, and Brabantio believes that Othello must have practiced some kind of witchcraft on Desdemona to make her act in such a conniving, insolent way, defiantly accusing Othello, saying "judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense/That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms" (*Othello*, I.ii.71-72). He takes his case before the Senate, who rules that Desdemona acted of her own accord and that she and Othello have a right to be married.

This first Act demonstrates these characters' reliance on worldly order as a reflection of cosmic order. Brabantio assumes that the social constructs that Desdemona has violated are based in moral veracity, implying that there is some universal moral order from which she has strayed. While berating Othello, Brabantio decries "I therefore apprehend and do attach thee/For an abuser of the world, a practicer/Of arts inhibited and out of warrant" (*Othello*, I.ii.76-78). The phrases "abuser of the world" and "out of warrant" suggest Brabantio's belief in a correct mode of worldly operation, and his belief that Othello's actions have defied that mode. In the world of *Othello*, however, Shakespeare implies that such order does not exist, and therefore social constructs are meaningless. By the play's conclusion, Shakespeare clearly has created a world lacking cosmic order, demonstrated by the anarchy of the action and the absent justice. Therefore, there is nothing larger for these social constructs to reflect, suggesting their futility. Othello's race serves as an example of a meaningless construct. Although the marriage of a Moor

and a white woman is highlighted as scandalous at the outset of the play, once the Senate deems their marriage to be legitimate, no one questions it except Iago. Brabantio, while still outraged, realizes there is nothing left for him to do if the Senate recognizes their union. This implies that the citizens make their value judgments based on the rulings of institutions of authority. If the Senate believes that Othello's race is not a concern, it must not be a concern, as this body that determines worldly order purportedly receives its authority through cosmic order.

While at the beginning the characters believe their world is ordered, evidenced by their faith in the Senate, I argue that this is false; there is no overarching system of justice that pervades the world of this play and the characters are initially blissfully unaware of this truth. Both the social constructs Othello and Desdemona have broken and the ruling of the Senate are inherently meaningless in a chaotic, unstructured world. By the play's conclusion, social constructs like interracial marriage and patriarchal control are irrelevant if justice is determined randomly, as evidenced through innocent Desdemona's death and malevolent Iago's survival. If there are no cosmic moral truths, earthly moral truths are nonexistent as well. For Elizabethan audiences, accustomed to these social constructs, witnessing their disintegration and ultimate irrelevance would have elicited additional uncomfortable questioning.

Iago, whose *musica humana* is fully dissonant and unbalanced, eventually reveals the dissonant, chaotic nature of the universe to the other characters. The most important relationship in the play, that between Othello and Desdemona, begins by appearing to be perfectly consonant. Upon observing this relationship and witnessing a kiss between them, however, Iago remarks that "Oh, you are well tuned now,/But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,/As honest as I am" (*Othello*, II.i.199-201). By likening their embrace to a well-tuned string instrument, Iago recognizes the harmony in their relationship and expresses his desire to infuse it with his own

malignancy (King, 151). He foreshadows that their perfectly consonant relationship will come to reflect the otherwise dissonant setting of the play. Although Othello and Desdemona are madly in love and are consonant in their relationship to each other, the overarching randomness of the cosmos, represented by Iago, will break them apart. While this chaotic setting removes the social constructs that are inhibitive to their relationship, like race and patriarchal authority, it likewise allows for the interference of the malignant force of Iago to bring about their demise.

Even though Othello and Desdemona begin the play in romantic bliss, there is implicit dissonance evident from their first interaction, suggesting the infiltration of the chaotic cosmos into their marital happiness and foreshadowing Iago's future intrusion. As Othello proclaims his love, he remarks:

Amen to that, sweet powers!
 I cannot speak enough of this content.
 It stops me here, it is too much of joy.
 And this, and this, the greatest discords be (*kissing her*)
 That e'er our hearts shall make!

(*Othello*, II.i.195-198)

Othello speaks in perfectly flowing iambic pentameter; his lines are only interrupted through kissing Desdemona, expressing that the kisses are “the greatest discords.” Erin Minear argues that through the inclusion of “and this, and this,” Shakespeare implies that each “this” is followed by a kiss, and although Othello uses this connection to state that there is no discord in their relationship, as it is antithetical that a kiss between lovers would be discordant, it suggests the discord to come. The rhythmic quality of his speech is made discordant through the kisses, implying a discord to the kisses themselves (Minear, “Music and the Crisis of Meaning in *Othello*,” 357). I agree with Minear in this instance and believe that this passage can be considered foreshadowing for the discord that will arise and a reflection of the dissonant, chaotic universe infiltrating their otherwise consonant relationship.

As Iago infuses his malignancy into the action and Othello comes to doubt his wife, the relationship between these characters becomes more and more estranged. In Act V Scene ii, when Othello enters the bedroom to murder Desdemona, he is almost persuaded to change his mind by kissing her in her sleep. He exclaims:

Oh, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee
And love thee after. (*kissing her*) One more, and that's the last.

(*Othello*, V.ii.16-19)

Kissing Desdemona reminds Othello of the love that he once felt for her and almost convinces him to not enact the justice he believes to be deserved. He finds that murder here is in tune, because he believes that Desdemona's actions have caused it to be justified. If justice were truly done, then there would be an overarching consonance to this relationship, as all characters would be treated rightly and would receive retribution. Minear demonstrates, however, that since Desdemona is truly innocent, this last kiss hearkens back to the dissonance implied in Act II Scene i and Desdemona's murder illustrates that dissonance has fully infiltrated their relationship. Therefore, although Othello hopes that murdering Desdemona will restore consonance, it does just the opposite and fulfills the allusions to dissonance implied through the earlier kisses.

In addition to the dissonant musical role that Desdemona plays and Emilia echoes through "The Willow Song," the other significant musical moment in *Othello* comes from Iago and the drinking songs he sings in Act II Scene iii. In an effort to get Cassio drunk enough to embarrass himself and lose his position, Iago sings two songs: "And Let Me the Cannikin Clink" and "King Stephen was a Worthy Peer." The lyrics for "And Let Me the Cannikin Clink" are thus:

*And let me the canakin clink, clink;
 And let me the canakin clink.
 A soldier's a man;
 O, man's life's but a span;
 Why then let a soldier drink.
 Some wine, boys!*

(*Othello*, II.iii.69-74)

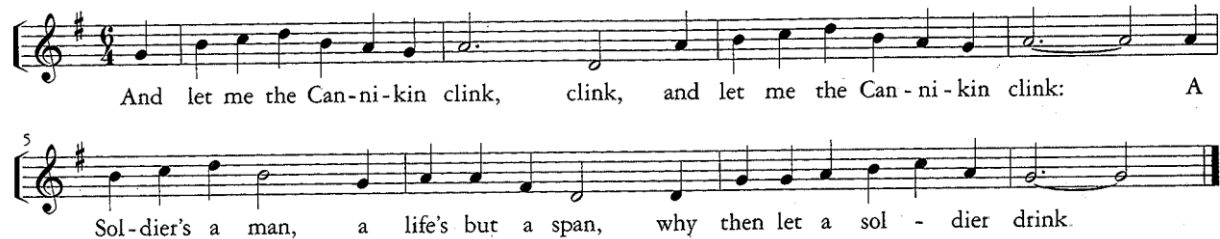


Figure 7—“And Let Me the Cannakin Clink,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 50.

No music survives for these lyrics, but the traditional theatrical tune that exists is a setting of *The Soldier’s Dance* or *The Soldier’s Life* (Duffin, 50). William Byrd created a setting of these lyrics to this tune and it is recorded in the Paris Conservatoire MS Res. 1186 (1630-40). The tune also survives, however, in several editions of John Playford’s *English Dancing Master* (1651) (Duffin 51). According to the Paris Conservatoire version, the piece is set solidly in the key of G Major with no mode mixture or accidentals. Formally, it is consonant through its use of phrasing. The first phrase ends on the fifth scale degree of D and the second phrase and midpoint end on the second scale degree of A, which is the fifth of the dominant chord in G Major. The third phrase is a close variation of the first phrase with the last phrase being a close variation of the second phrase, only now ending on the tonic of G. The rhythms are also very simple, being only a mixture of quarter notes and half notes.

The lyrics for “King Stephen was and a Worthy Peer” are thus:

*King Stephen was and a worthy peer,
 His breeches cost him but a crown
 He held them sixpence all too dear,
 With that he call’d the tailor lown;
 He was a wight of high renown,*

*And thou art but of low degree.
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
[Then] take thy auld cloak about thee.
Some wine ho!*

(*Othello*, II.iii.89-97)

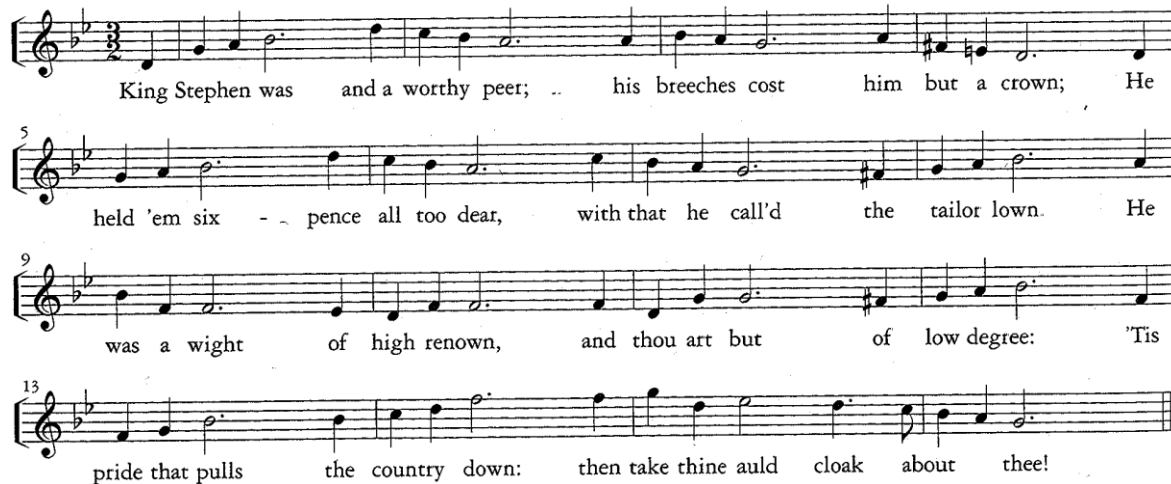


Figure 8—“King Stephen was and a Worthy Peer,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W, W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 248.

This song is a traditionally Scottish tune known variously as *The Auld Cloak; Bell, My Wife*; and *Take Thine Auld Cloak About Thee* (Duffin, 250). The earliest source for these lyrics set to this tune is Bishop Percy’s Folio Manuscript, circa 1643 (Duffin, 250). While there is still some doubt as to whether or not this is the original tune, as is typical with most scholarship on original Shakespearean music, this tune is interestingly based on the same *Pasamezzo Antico/Romanesca* ground bass melody that was used for *Greensleeves*, suggesting that the tune is old and popular, making it a likely candidate (Duffin, 250).

In terms of theory, this piece is based in the G minor modality, but it employs a great deal of mode mixture. There are multiple instances of F#s, which would be considered diatonic in the harmonic G minor scale, but there are also occasional E naturals, where the sixth is sharpened, hinting at the major scale instead. Sharping this sixth scale degree also hints at the Dorian mode, which is the mode of “Greensleeves” and perhaps serves as a linking device between these two

tunes.¹⁶ Formally, the piece is divided into four large phrases: the first ends with “but a crown” on the fifth scale degree of D, the second ends with “the tailor lown” on the third scale degree of Bb, the third ends with “of low degree” on the third scale degree of Bb, and the last ends with “cloak about thee” on the tonic of G. The first two phrases seem to be very much in the Dorian mode, emphasized by the sharped sixth scale degree. The end of the second phrase, however, with its sharped seventh, reverts back to the minor modality. The third phrase, with its emphases on Bb and F natural, evokes the Bb major scale, the parallel major, until the F# appears again and reverts back to minor. The final phrase continues in the minor modality.

Although these two songs are very similar in terms of dramatic usage, musically, they are quite different. While “A Let Me the Cannikin Clink” is very consonant and simple, “King Stephen was a Worthy Peer” is complex and dissonant. Both, however, create an atmosphere of revelry that encourages Cassio’s drunkenness. These songs seem very similar to drinking songs present in Shakespearean comedies and romances such as *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*, respectively, which will be discussed subsequently. In these other genres, music as part of drunken revelry is usually either celebrated or at least viewed humorously. In this instance, however, Iago manipulates Cassio through these drinking songs into embarrassing himself and losing his position, initiating the tragic action. By incorporating drinking songs into *Othello*, which was written after many of his comedies in which this form was quite common, I see

¹⁶ Musical modes are a variety of scales that constitute the majority of Western music. They are formed by assembling various organizations of whole steps and half steps. There are seven modes: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian. During the 17th century, with the development of the Western tonal system, two modes came to supersede the rest: the Ionian, or the Major mode, and the Aeolian, or the Minor mode. The Ionian mode consists of a pattern of whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step. The Aeolian mode consists of a pattern of whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step. The other modes frequently occur in Medieval and Renaissance songs and occasionally in later music as well (“Modes”).

Shakespeare taking his old formulaic approach and subverting it. Instead of drinking songs being celebratory or humorous, they now lead to tragedy. Likely, Shakespeare could have included them also to serve as a familiar reference to the audience, leading them to believe that this play could in fact be comedic before shocking them with the ensuing tragic action.

A final example of dissonance on the level of *musica humana* comes from the location of the action. From a macrocosmic perspective, the fact that the characters journey from Venice to Cyprus, but never return, creates an additional, larger sense of discord. It is a frequent motif, particularly in Shakespeare's comedies, to have characters venture into a new land to experience the majority of the dramatic action before returning to the initial location for the needed resolution. The Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* and the forest outside Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are obvious examples. In these instances, the characters enter this exotic environment, undergo dramatic action, and then return home, allowing a dramatic and a physical resolution. At the outset of *Othello*, it seems as if Shakespeare is following a similar pattern, having the action quickly shift to Cyprus. Importantly, however, the characters never return; the play ends abruptly with all the major characters remaining in Cyprus. This lack of physical resolution is further evidence of the overarching discordant nature of *Othello*.

Shakespeare's *Othello* demonstrates dissonance across the various musical spheres of the Renaissance. The discordant *musica instrumentalis* and *musica humana* support the thoroughly discordant *musica mundana*, suggesting a bleak worldview for the play. When the clown asks for the "music that may not be heard" and the musician replies with "we have none such, sir," he implies that there is no music of the spheres; there is no benevolent supernatural power enacting justice or order, promulgating nihilism and existential crisis. For an early 17th century audience, solidly entrenched in Christianity and believing in the reason and justice of a benevolent God,

the nihilistic overtones in *Othello* would have been disturbing and would have called into question accepted patterns of religious belief. While nihilistic notions seem atheistic to a modern audience, they likely would have emphasized the satanic nature of Iago for Elizabethans. In the Renaissance, chaos was typically associated with darkness, order and Godliness with light. This dichotomy reinforces the religious association of chaos and Satan (Rumrich, 1037).¹⁷ Satan, as understood by Elizabethan audiences, was an agent of chaos, and therefore a world ruled by chaos implied the presence of demonic forces. While Elizabethan audiences likely understood Iago as an agent of the devil, I believe that Shakespeare created this dissonant, chaotic universe not as one arguing for the power of demonic forces, but as one which invites his audience to question the presence of an omnipotent and beneficent deity.

By completing a thorough analysis of the theological Boethian levels of music, *Othello* becomes a manifestation of Shakespeare's religious doubts. The *musica instrumentalis*, *musica humana*, and *musica mundana* reflect dissonance, suggesting that Shakespeare created a world in which the accepted notion of the benevolent Creator is questioned. For his staunchly religious audience, Shakespeare would not have been able to make an actively anti-religious stance, as Queen Elizabeth was the leader of the Anglican Church. Because she was his ruler with the power to imprison and execute, Shakespeare could not safely make his statement explicitly. Therefore, through the interactions he explores between the Boethian levels of music, Shakespeare can subtly explore his own questioning and elicit similar questioning amongst his viewing audience. From a musical perspective, *Othello* becomes an outlet for Shakespeare to express his religious ambivalence.

¹⁷ "The dark deformity of chaos" was an important aspect of natural philosophy from the 13th through 18th centuries. It was thought that chaos arose when love was absent. Since Christians believed Christ to be love, its absence, or chaos, was thought to be the realm of Satan (Rumrich, 1037).

IV. *Twelfth Night* as Literary Polyphony

While in *Hamlet* and *Othello* I evaluated Shakespeare's uses of literal and metaphoric music in tragedies, I will now take the same approach with one of his true comedies and his last romance, *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*, respectively. Throughout Shakespeare's work, but most notably in his comedies, social functions—weddings, dances, feasts, etc.—necessitated musical accompaniment. Within these gatherings, Shakespeare often used music to provide atmosphere congruous to the mirth and celebration present in the action. In these situations, music serves as an aural manifestation of the harmonious resolutions of his plots; this is especially prevalent in his comedies which end in marriages, as many do (Ingram, 149). To Elizabethan audiences, it was often the straight-forward singing of well-known songs and catches that was the most popular (Ingram, 143). The catch was a round for male voices, often concerned with comedic male leisure time activities, namely drinking and women, and often sung as drinking songs (Johnson, "Catch").¹⁸ Usually associated with low comedy, the catch functioned not only to entertain the audience, often through drunken performances, but also to deepen characterization and show the relationship between the upper and lower classes (Dircks, 89). In plays like *Twelfth Night*, the catch serves to highlight the dichotomy between the music of lower class characters like Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek from upper class characters like Duke Orsino. In plays like *King Henry IV Part I*, however, the catch serves to

¹⁸ Catches were first published in London in three collections by Thomas Ravenscroft: *Pammelia* (1609), *Deuteromelia* (1609), and *Melismata* (1611). They were mainly written for three to four voices, but sometimes were written for as many as ten. The performance quality of the catch was not of supreme importance and all listeners were frequently invited to join the singing. The social class of those who sang catches is not entirely clear to scholars. It seems as if they started as pastimes of the privileged class and spread to the lower classes during the reign of James I (Johnson, "Catch").

show the close connection between Falstaff and Hal, despite their class differences. In each of these situations, catches elucidate the role of social status.

The first production of *Twelfth Night* is thought to have taken place on January 6, 1601. Importantly, this is the twelfth night after Christmas, which was a celebratory affair in the Elizabethan calendar. “Twelfth Night” was associated with the Christian holiday of Epiphany, or the day the Magi arrived to visit the infant Christ, and it was expected that people would overindulge themselves and engage in revelry to commemorate this occasion (Braude, 29). Because of the festive nature of the setting and the comedic associations between revelry and music, it is logical that music has a special significance in *Twelfth Night*. The importance of music can be seen immediately, as Orsino opens the play by saying “if music be the food of love, play on” (*Twelfth Night*, I.i.1). Additionally, the name of the place in which the action occurs, Illyria, can be seen as an allusion to the word “lyrical.” Through choosing such a name, Shakespeare could be inherently suggesting that this is an intensely musical location.

It was an Elizabethan trope to think of people as instruments and therefore as playing musical parts; conversely, it was also customary to think of musical parts as individuals (Lin, 138). Kelsey Lin argues that within the world of *Twelfth Night*, each of the characters plays an important role in the resolution and acts as an individual musical part, resulting in a complicated polyphony that eventually resolves to chordal, uniform harmony (Lin, 130). The main plot, involving Duke Orsino, Viola/Cesario, Olivia, and Sebastian, is integrally connected to the comedic subplot of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Feste, Maria, and Malvolio. All of these characters play different, yet necessary roles in the eventual harmonious resolution. This is especially visible and explicit in the subtitle of the play, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*. The phrase “what you will” implies that Shakespeare offers his audience a verbal version of the “quodiblet,”

or “what you please,” which was a popular musical form of the period. In a quodiblet, independent melodies, which were often a patchwork of melodies from other sources, work together polyphonically (Lin, 143).

I agree with Lin in this sense and believe that Shakespeare’s subtitle and its allusion to this polyphonic musical form demonstrate the polyphonic nature of the play and the complicated, yet harmonious plot line. Additionally, however, I believe that the polyphonic nature of the plot correlates to consonant *musica humana* and *musica mundana* in terms of social structure. In this harmonious cosmos, everyone performs their required roles. Sir Toby Belch cannot attempt to become a Duke like Orsino, for example, just as a bass cannot become a soprano. Each individual must perform their part in their own staff and not venture into an upper voice part, or higher social strata. This argument also relates back to my earlier argument about social structure in *Othello*. In *Othello*, social structure and earthly institutions of power, like the Senate, are meaningless, as they are reflections of no larger cosmic order. Because there is cosmic order in *Twelfth Night*, however, the social structures of Illyria are equally ordered and therefore need to be abided by.

Within *Hamlet* and *Othello*, I argued for a consonant and a dissonant universe, respectively, based on the issuance of justice within those plays. In *Twelfth Night*, I believe that the universe is a consonant one, but that Shakespeare yet again has an outlier from this consonance. While Ophelia was the character in *Hamlet* that did not conform to her universe, I believe that within *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio plays a similar role. However, while Ophelia rebels against the justice she receives and refuses to submit to the just, organized world in which she lives, I believe that Shakespeare uses the fate of Malvolio to show the negative results of acting out of social station. The world of Illyria is one less concerned with justice than with

maintaining harmony and lyricism. Both Ophelia and Malvolio refuse to play the role their consonant universe gives them. In *Hamlet*, this results in Ophelia committing suicide. In *Twelfth Night*, this results in Malvolio not having a positive resolution to his plotline.

In order to fully isolate Malvolio from the other characters, Shakespeare gives him a desire to change his social station. His *musica humana* is not in tune with this universe, as he is not balanced within himself or in his relationships to other characters according to the musical workings of the play. After Malvolio disrupts their party, Maria forms a plan to humiliate Malvolio in which she will forge a love note from Olivia to Malvolio, convincing him that Olivia desires him. He aspires to marry Olivia not from love, however, but from ambition to improve his social standing (Braude, 32). Upon reading the letter, he imagines what his married life would be like, saying “having been three months married to her, sitting in my state... Calling my officers about me, in my branch’d velvet gown, having come from a daybed, where I have left Olivia sleeping” (*Twelfth Night*, II.v.45-49). He does not speak to the beauty of Olivia or how much he loves her, only to how he can use her to better his own position. Because of statements such as these, demonstrating his unsettled *musica humana* within this cosmos, Shakespeare paints Malvolio as a comic and unsympathetic character, heightened later by his yellow, cross-gartered stockings. After the truth is finally revealed, Olivia addresses Malvolio, saying “alas, poor fool, how have they baffled thee!” presumably because he is “musically and socially irredeemable” (*Twelfth Night*, V.i.369) (Lin, 157).

At the conclusion of the play, only Malvolio has not found happiness; it is significant that he is the only one to remain unchanged (Braude, 33). The exception to the rule and outside of the realm of music, his role resembles that of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock hates music and celebration, a quality associated with his status as

a Jew. When revelry and celebrating occur outside of his house, he says the following to his daughter:

What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica.
 Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
 And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
 Clamber not you up to the casements then,
 Nor thrust your head into the public street
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces.
 But stop my house's ears—I mean my casements—
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
 My sober house.

(*The Merchant of Venice*, II.v.27-36)

Shylock is a character outside of his musical, consonant universe, presumably because of his religion. I argue that in *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio is a similar musical outlier, partly because of his desire to climb socially, but also because of his Puritanism. As Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Feste celebrate, Malvolio enters and scolds Sir Toby for his loud, drunken, musical outburst, remarking:

My masters, are you mad? Or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that you squeak out your coziers' catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you?

(*Twelfth Night*, II.iii.86-92)

Not only does this statement reveal Malvolio's aversion to celebratory music-making, an aversion that would have been in particularly poor taste given the setting of *Twelfth Night*, but he also speaks it in prose, revealing his distance from the world of poetry and song. Importantly, also, Sir Toby responds with "we did keep time, sir, in our catches," signifying that while Malvolio insists on respecting the spirit of sobriety and temperance, Sir Toby insists on respecting the rhythm and beat of the music (*Twelfth Night*, V.i.93). Sir Toby is in tune with this musical, consonant, polyphonic world, adhering to its rules, while Malvolio is not, promoting a world of sobriety not in tune with the *Twelfth Night* revelry in which he finds himself.

After his scolding and disapproval, Maria refers to Malvolio as “a kind of Puritan.” While modern audiences note that a “Puritan” connotes someone very Spartan in lifestyle, an Elizabethan audience would also note that Puritans were “the sworn enemies of polyphony” (*Twelfth Night*, II.iii.140) (Lin, 87). With the Reformation in the 16th century, the kind of music that was to be played in the service and worship of God became the subject of great debate. Catholics continued in their tradition of polyphony, originating from early Gregorian chant (Little, 439). Catholics saw this music as traditional and therefore important to the sanctity of the liturgy. Additionally, they viewed it as a way of restraining the individuality of the composer and keeping the focus on worship (Little, 441).

Protestants, however, rejected this dependence on tradition and instead focused intently on the Word as revealed through the Bible. They saw polyphony as clouding the meaning of the text through muddying the sound. In 1553, for example, Thomas Becon published a book entitled *Authorized Reliques of Rome*, which provides an example of an early Puritan diatribe against polyphony, as it was considered a Catholic practice which distracted the listener from the meaning of the text (Lin, 87). As an alternative, Protestants developed the Lutheran chorale, made famous by Bach, which developed from Pre-Reformation German hymns, Gregorian chant, and, vitally and distinctly, secular folk song (Spelman, 168). In these chorales, unlike in Catholic polyphonic music, the melody usually appeared in the tenor voice, with two to four additional voices providing homophonic support (Spelman, 169). It is important to note, however, that polyphonic music was still played in the more liturgical Protestant churches, particularly the Church of England. It was in the most extreme of Protestant churches, namely the Puritan church, where polyphony was most detested.

From a religious perspective, therefore, I argue that in the structure of *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's Catholic, or high church, sympathies are coming into play yet again, as he invites his audience to poke fun at and not sympathize with a staunchly Puritan character and to engage and revel in a polyphonic plot. While the dichotomy Shakespeare creates appears to be one that is strictly Catholic versus Protestant, it is more truly one between high church forms and reformed church practices. There are myriad reasons that Shakespeare could have chosen this approach. First, the vast majority of his audience would have been members of the Church of England, and therefore they would have identified with the polyphonic workings of the plot without skepticism. Puritans were an ostracized group and an easy target for playwrights. Additionally, as has been evidenced, Shakespeare had demonstrated Catholic sympathies and could likely have had a propensity for Catholic, liturgical traditions.

By creating this vague polyphonic dichotomy of Catholicism and high church Protestantism versus Puritanism and by having a character removed from this consonant resolution once again, Shakespeare demonstrates his refusal to wholly dedicate himself to a consonant, liturgical worldview. While Malvolio provides a great deal of the comedy of the play and Shakespeare invites his audience to laugh at his unsympathetic depiction, Malvolio's last line is "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you," to which Olivia responds "he hath been most notoriously abused" (*Twelfth Night*, V.i.378-379). Shakespeare provides subtle suggestions that perhaps Malvolio really should be a sympathetic character and perhaps the audience should question why Malvolio not receiving proper justice does not disturb them. Although almost the entirety of the play satirizes and demeans Malvolio, this last exchange hints at the possibility of Malvolio, in fact, deserving justice. Once again, Shakespeare demonstrates his religious

questioning by leaving someone out of his consonant universe and making his portrayal of that outlier somewhat ambiguous.

I will now evaluate the *musica instrumentalis* within *Twelfth Night* and show how the catches and tunes used articulate the various upper and lower class musical roles played by the different characters. In Act II Scene iii, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Maria, and Feste sing a variety of catches while enjoying a drunken party. The texts referenced include: “O Mistress Mine,” “Holy Thy Peace,” “The Mad Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow,” “Peg a Ramsey,” “Three Merry Men,” “There Dwelt a Man in Babylon,” “O the Twelfth Day of December,” and “Farewell, Dear Love.” “O Mistress Mine,” the Fool’s song in Act II Scene iii, still exists in the form that Shakespeare likely would have known. This tune was found in Queen Elizabeth’s *Virginal Book*, arranged by William Byrd, in Thomas Morley’s *Concert Lessons*, printed in 1599, and in John Gamble’s *Commonplace Book*, printed in 1659 (Duffin, 287).¹⁹ Upwards of twenty different versions and harmonizations of the tune have been published since then, giving strong credence to the validity of this basic melody and making it quite likely that these various versions were all derived from the true source that Shakespeare knew (Elson, 209). The lyrics for “O Mistress Mine,” as found in *Twelfth Night*, are as follows:

*O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear! Your true love’s coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting.
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man’s son doth know.
What is love? ‘Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What’s to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty,*

¹⁹ Both William Byrd and Thomas Morley have been discussed in earlier footnotes. John Gamble was an English cornettist, copyist, and composer. His *Commonplace Book* is an anthology of more than 300 compositions written by his contemporaries (Spink and Holman).

*Then come kiss me sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.*

(*Twelfth Night*, II.i.39-44, 47-52)

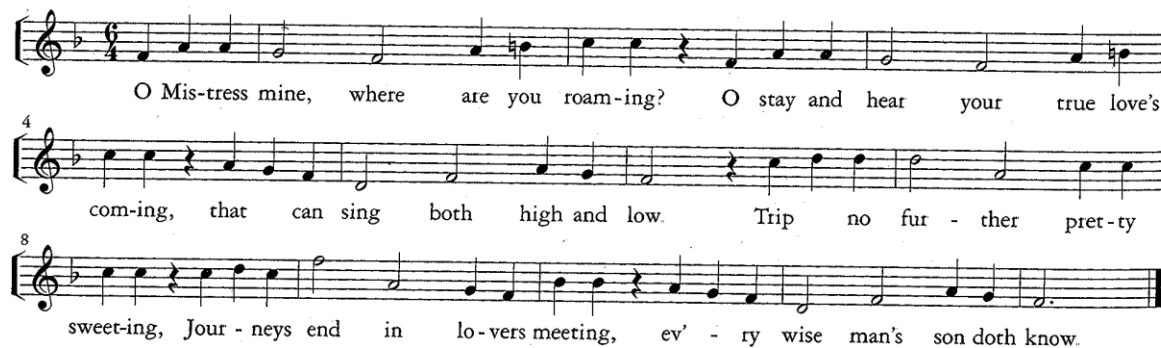


Figure 9—"O Mistress Mine," from Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 286.

The AABCCB rhyme scheme of Shakespeare's text was very unusual among poems of the time and therefore, the different settings found show some variation. The Thomas Morley setting was intended for an eight line stanza, the Byrd setting a seven line stanza, and the Gamble setting a five line stanza. Still, none of these settings perfectly accommodate the Shakespearean version of a six line stanza (Duffin, 287). Different editors have repeated various lines to make the tune and melody fit properly, but it is evident that Shakespeare was taking some artistic liberty with the well-known tune and text (Duffin, 287).

Musically, this tune alternates between F and C Major. It begins on the tonic of F major, but then employs B naturals in the first two phrases, suggesting C major. By ending the first half of the tune on the tonic of F, however, F major is solidified as the overarching key. The form is divided into two halves of three phrases each. The first two phrases of each half are very similar, followed by a concluding phrase; the concluding phrase of each half is the same. While there is some tonal confusion at the beginning with the use of the B natural, this is generally a simple, upbeat tune that is easy to sing and very memorable. The joyful, lilting quality of the music befits the text, which expresses a *carpe diem* love theme. It reflects the quick passing of time

and therefore the importance of enjoying the present moment. I believe these mirthful lyrics, reflected through the uplifting tune, would encourage the drunken celebration that continues to occur.

Also in Act II Scene iii, Sir Toby and Feste alternate singing sections of “Farewell, Dear Love,” which highlight Malvolio as out of tune. The original text and music are from Robert Jones’ *First Book of Songes* (1600) and the lyrics included in the play are thus: (Duffin, 139).²⁰

SIR TOBY BELCH: *Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.*

MARIA: Nay, good Sir Toby.

FOOL: *His eyes do show his days are almost done.*

MALVOLIO: Is’t even so?

SIR TOBY BELCH: *But I will never die*

FOOL: *Sir Toby, there you lie*

MALVOLIO: This is much credit to you

SIR TOBY BELCH: *Shall I bid him go?*

FOOL: *What an if you do?*

SIR TOBY BELCH: *Shall I bid him go, and spare not?*

FOOL: *O no, no, no, no, you dare not.*

SIR TOBY BELCH: Out o’tune, sir. Ye lie. Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?

(*Twelfth Night*, II.iii.102-116)



Figure 10—“Farewell, Dear Heart,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 138.

²⁰ Robert Jones was an English composer. His publication *First Book of Songes*, the first of five books of lute-songs, was released in 1600. His single collection of madrigals was published in 1607 (Brown, “Jones, Robert (ii)”).

Musically, this tune is predominantly in the Dorian mode, beginning and ending on its tonic of D. There is one instance of a G#, alluding to A major for the line “Sir Toby, there you lie.” There is also another instance of chromaticism in the C# in the final descending phrase of “No, no, no, no, you dare not,” alluding to D harmonic minor. The reference to A Major, the major of the dominant within this key, can be seen as a light, comedic interjection by Feste into this otherwise doleful melody. Also, the descending line with the chromaticism bears a resemblance to a similar line in “The Willow Song” in *Othello*, suggesting it as a frequent motif for expressing sadness. The mournful overtones of the song provide melodramatic comedy considering that Sir Toby sings this in a drunken state to torment Malvolio. Instead of mourning the fact that he must leave his lover, he drunkenly wonders whether or not he could order Malvolio to leave, because Sir Toby Belch is, in fact, of a higher social station than Malvolio. By choosing a tune with such a dolorous quality for Sir Toby’s drunken interaction with Malvolio, Shakespeare invites his audience to satirize depressing ballads by showing them out of their expected context. Also, by having Sir Toby sing a familiar tune, Shakespeare lets the audience align themselves with Sir Toby and therefore find themselves within the harmonious, celebratory musical inner workings of the play.

This section integrally demonstrates Malvolio as outside of the polyphonic, musical world of the play. Not only does Malvolio speak in prose while the other characters sing in verse, but all of his comments are condescending and sardonic. When Malvolio says “this is much credit to you,” he makes a sarcastic statement, implying that music-making does not really do credit to anyone. Sir Toby responds explicitly, not only saying that he is “out o’tune, sir” but also that he “lie[s]” (*Twelfth Night*, II.iii.113). He then retorts with his famous question, “dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?” (*Twelfth Night*,

II.iii.116). In some ways, this question serves as one of the thematic questions of the play as a whole; is Malvolio's "virtue" truly virtuous? Are Sir Toby Belch and his other drunken cohorts sinners in this universe because of their indulgence with "cakes and ale?" I argue that Shakespeare answers this question negatively. Given the setting of *Twelfth Night*, with its implied celebratory festivities and the Catholic, liturgical leanings, Shakespeare criticizes Malvolio's Spartan, Puritanical virtue.

The play concludes with Feste singing a tune commonly referred to as either "When that I Was" or "the Rain it Raineth Everyday." Importantly, and uniquely, scholars have found no evidence that these lyrics existed apart from Shakespeare's own creation (Duffin, 449). The most likely tune used in Elizabethan performances is linked to the poem *Tom Tinker*, cited in Cyril Tourneur's *Laugh and Lie Down, or the World's Folly*, as the tune for a ballad entitled "Whilom I Was" (Duffin, 449).²¹ This tune, like many others, survives in John Playford's *English Dancing Master* of 1651 (Duffin, 98). The lyrics included in the play are thus:

FOOL:
(sings)
When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.
But when I came to man's estate,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
For the rain it raineth every day.
But when I came, alas! To wive,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain it raineth every day.
But when I came unto my beds,

²¹ Cyril Tourneur was a British dramatist and contemporary of Shakespeare. Little is known about his life, but his major two dramatic works are *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Atheist's Tragedy*. *Laugh and Lie Down, or the World's Folly* was published as a prose pamphlet ("Cyril Tourneur").

*With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
 With toss-pots still had drunken heads,
 For the rain it raineth every day.
 A great while ago the world begun,
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
 But that's all one, our play is done,
 And we'll strive to please you every day.*

(*Twelfth Night*, V.i.389-408)

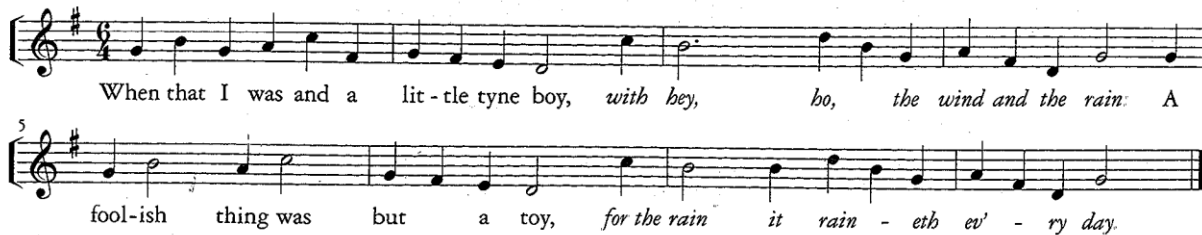


Figure 11—“When that I was” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 448.

Musically, this piece is simple and predictable. The tune is securely in the G major modality and the form is almost a perfect AA repeat with the beginning and the end of each phrase on the tonic of G. Textually, this clear and easily definable tune helps to end the play on a clearly resolved note. At the conclusion, the polyphony of the play has ceased, with each character’s part resolving to its natural state; of course, with the exception of Malvolio. This song, therefore, through its easily definable tonality, rhythm, and structure, reflects that resolution. The complicated workings of the polyphony have ended, and the lyricism, consonance, and order of Illyria are now being presented by Feste. The text also reflects this resolution, as it depicts the passing of age and the progression of life to its natural conclusion. The phrase “for the rain it raineth every day,” while somewhat pessimistic, also reflects a hopefulness to face what comes, as life will resolve appropriately in this consonant cosmos. The final lines “our play is done,/And we’ll strive to please you every day” reflect this resolution and act as a clean, concise, meta-theatrical ending.

By looking at the *musica instrumentalis* and the *musica humana*, in which all the characters engage in polyphonic movement to allow the plot to be realized, I believe the *musica mundana* is consonant and ordered. Like *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night* is a Catholic-leaning world, one that celebrates polyphony and allows for earthly pleasures. The rigid, rule-abiding Malvolio is the unsympathetic character and the object of scorn and humiliation. While Malvolio would undoubtedly be funny, and Shakespeare certainly tries to amuse his audience, his unsympathetic depiction also suggests that his Puritanism and his unmusical nature make him an outsider and the lack of resolution to his plotline acceptable. At the end of *Twelfth Night*, I believe that Shakespeare intended his audience to celebrate the happy fates of Orsino, Viola, Olivia, Sebastian, Maria, and Sir Toby, and to not be outraged for Malvolio. Therefore, although Shakespeare follows a similar musical pattern to *Hamlet*, in which there is a consonant universe with one outlying character, I find his intention in *Twelfth Night* to be different. By highlighting Malvolio's "otherness," he sheds light on the possibility that justice for all is not always a concern. If someone is outside of the musical inner workings of the play, perhaps they do not merit resolution. Still, Olivia's final line in reference to Malvolio, "he hath been most notoriously abus'd," raises the possibility that the characters in the play, and the audience, have been wrong in amusing themselves at his expense (*Twelfth Night*, V.i.379). By once again creating a musical outlier, Shakespeare demonstrates his Catholic sympathies while also hinting at religious questioning.

V. Protestantism in *The Tempest*

The Tempest, written in 1611 and often assumed to be Shakespeare's last play, is also undoubtedly his most musical. While music is an important and revealing aspect of many of

Shakespeare's plays, as I have illustrated by examining *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Twelfth Night*, it is within his romances, but especially *The Tempest*, that Shakespeare explores the Boethian levels of music most explicitly and most in depth (Dunn, 394). *Musica instrumentalis* is ever present, and Shakespeare uses music as both an expression of power and to further the plot. Through Ariel's music, Prospero entrances the other characters into fulfilling his objectives; namely, the music helps to lead Ferdinand to Miranda and to inhibit the murderous schemes of Antonio and Sebastian. I argue that the musical world that Shakespeare creates is a consonant one in which justice is achieved, similar to that of *Hamlet*. Shakespeare complicates this notion of a just, consonant universe, however, by making the religious elements less apparent. Unlike in *Hamlet*, where Shakespeare makes explicitly Catholic references, *The Tempest* incorporates many otherworldly, supernatural elements that make religious symbols much more difficult to discern.

Although the other two consonant Shakespearean universes I have explored thus far are Catholic or Catholic leaning universes, I argue that within *The Tempest*, Shakespeare now explores Protestantism. John Norton, in his article "Prospero Humiliated: Protestant Theology in *The Tempest*" creates a detailed argument for how and why the world of *The Tempest* is Protestant, and I agree with many of his points. Norton explains that Prospero was living in sin while serving as Duke of Milan, "corrupted by a lust for power and supernatural authority" (Norton, 395). However, through being banished and humiliated, Prospero relays to Miranda that he came ashore on this island "by providence divine," symbolizing his recognition of receiving grace (*The Tempest*, I.ii.159). Norton even argues that Prospero undergoes a form of baptism through his banishment, as he explains to Miranda:

Thou didst smile,
 Infused with a fortitude from heaven,
 When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,
 Under my burden groaned, which raised in me

An undergoing stomach, to bear up
Against what should ensue

(*The Tempest*, I.ii.153-158)

Through providential design, symbolized by little Miranda “smil[ing]” and being “infused with a fortitude from heaven,” Prospero shed tears, resulting in a form of Protestant baptismal rebirth, a necessary component of salvation. Norton compares this passage to a passage from Martin Luther, explaining the necessity of rebirth, in which Luther states “all is lost without a rebirth through the water and the Spirit. Don’t imagine that you will enter the kingdom of God unless you have been reborn through water and the Spirit” (Luther 22.Jn3:4, as quoted in Norton, 397). Protestant doctrine states that one cannot be saved through good works done on Earth, only through grace given from God. *The Tempest* is a Protestant world because Prospero receives grace, signified by his removal from the sinful world of Milan and his arrival on the harmonious, heavenly island. The play, therefore, shows Prospero as a member of the chosen, who received God’s grace due to no good actions of his own, only God’s supreme benevolence (Norton, 405).

As a Protestant universe, the *musica mundana* of *The Tempest* is consonant. One of the most clearly defined references to consonant *musica mundana* in *The Tempest* occurs in Act V scene i, in which Prospero discusses his magical abilities and his plan to relinquish them once he achieves his justice:

But this rough magic
I hereby abjure, and when I have required
Some heavenly music—which even now I do—
To work mine ends upon their senses, that
This airy charm is for, I’ll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I’ll drown my book.

(*The Tempest*, V.i.51-57)

In this instance, Shakespeare shows that it is “heavenly music,” or the music of the spheres, which grants him his magical ability. Even though the phrase “music of the spheres” does not appear explicitly within the text, John Cutts, in his article “Music and the Supernatural in *The Tempest*” argues that the music continually in the air on the island is equivalent to it; I agree with his argument. Prospero needs the assistance of the consonant *musica mundana* to “work [his] ends upon their senses,” even claiming that it is what “this airy charm is for.” That “airy charm” can be interpreted as his magical ability, manifested through music, particularly because “air” can be seen as an explicit reference to music as well. While living in Milan, Prospero was among the damned, living in sin. Through his banishment, however, and through his rebirth and acceptance of grace, Prospero regained his place among the chosen. Prospero, then, becomes an agent of God, working God’s ends upon the island, symbolized through the musical consonance present and his ability to manipulate it. Throughout the course of the action, Prospero works to help others who are among the chosen, mainly Caliban, Alonso, and Gonzalo, to accept grace and regain their place among the chosen as well.

Although the world of the island is consonant, there are characters present that are reprobate and that are chosen and have not yet accepted grace; none of these individuals are in tune with the music of the island. Norton argues that the actions of Antonio, Sebastian, Stephano, and Trinculo are sinful and that they are therefore dissonant, deaf to the island’s power. Caliban initially lives in sin, like Prospero in Milan, but his ability to hear the island’s music, evidenced through his saying “the isle is full of noises,/ Sounds, and sweet airs that delight and hurt not” reveals his status as among the chosen and foreshadows his eventual salvation (*The Tempest*, III.ii.135-136).

Within his article, Norton advocates for a more Lutheran view of the Protestant nature of *The Tempest*, arguing not for predestination but for grace as possible for all. I, however, will take Norton's argument even further, advocating for a Calvinist reading in which predestination is very much at play. Most famous for his doctrine of predestination, Calvin received comfort from his belief that "the boundaries dividing the reprobate from the elect [could] never be crossed" (Luke 16:36, as quoted in Bouwsa, 36). Therefore, while Norton believes there to be hope for Stephano, Trinculo, and Antonio to receive grace and be saved, I argue for the Calvinist view in which they are all reprobate and it is only Caliban who can receive grace, evidenced through his ability to hear the music of the island.

Cutts describes Stephano, Trinculo, Sebastian, and Antonio, the reprobate and discordant characters, as "in complete contrast to the heavenly aspect of the island and the powers ruling it" (Cutts, 354). Antonio and Sebastian, through their scheming treachery, are unable to hear the "solemn music" that Ariel plays in Act II scene i that puts all of the other characters to sleep. David Lindley argues that because of this, Antonio and Sebastian, even more so than Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, are "characters in whose soul there is no music" (Lindley, 219). Also, Antonio, perhaps the most obviously reprobate character in the play, remains that way after the play's conclusion. Prospero forgives Antonio for his treachery, showing his compassionate nature and the presence of grace within him, saying "I do forgive thee,/Unnatural though thou art" and then again "for you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother/Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive/Thy rankest fault, all of them" (*The Tempest*, V.i.78-79, 130-132). Antonio, however, refuses to respond to these acts of forgiveness and shows no remorse. He ends the play in the same fashion as he begins it, sinful and out of tune

with the island's harmonious *musica mundana*, providing evidence for a Calvinist reading of the text.

I will now examine some of the *musica instrumentalis* within the play and demonstrate how it relates to the play's religious inner-workings. Ariel, the most musical character in the play, sings three main songs: "Come Unto These Yellow Sands," "Full Fathom Five," and "Where the Bee Sucks." While we have seen that Shakespeare predominantly uses pre-existing tunes and often pre-existing lyrics for his songs, two of Ariel's songs are known to be original compositions, composed solely for *The Tempest* (Lindley, 230). While no original setting survives for "Come Unto These Yellow Sands," original settings by Robert Johnson do survive for "Full Fathom Five" and "Where the Bee Sucks" (Lindley, 230). I argue that the use of original compositions has the artistic effect of emphasizing Ariel's otherworldly, supernatural qualities. Since the music does not have pre-existing connotations for the audience, a fact that Shakespeare often used for dramatic purposes in other instances, the songs seem more distant and unknown, particularly in the context of other songs in the play that are familiar tunes. By singing original compositions, therefore, Ariel becomes the voice of the musical world, or the vocal manifestation of the *musica mundana*.

Additionally, I believe that the otherworldly nature of Ariel's music, and therefore Ariel's special place as the mouthpiece of the music of the spheres, is also emphasized through Ariel's rare use of personal pronouns within his songs. Unlike the songs of Stephano and Caliban, which will be discussed subsequently, Ariel does not include himself in the subject of his singing for his first two songs. Especially when considering that these were presumably original compositions on the part of Shakespeare and Robert Johnson, the removal of Ariel's personage from his music serves to further distance him from the audience. Unlike in songs that do employ

personal pronouns, Shakespeare does not invite the audience to adopt the position of Ariel; they remain passive observers of the music (Lindley, 226). This distances the audience from Ariel, signifying that he holds a place apart from the normal human beings within the text.

The words for “Come Unto These Yellow Sands” are thus:

*Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Curtsied when you have, and kiss'd
The wild waves whist;
Foot it featly here, and there, and sweet Sprites bear
The burthen.
Hark, hark, I hear; the strain of strutting Chanticleer
Cry cockadoodle-do*

(*The Tempest*, I.ii.375-387)

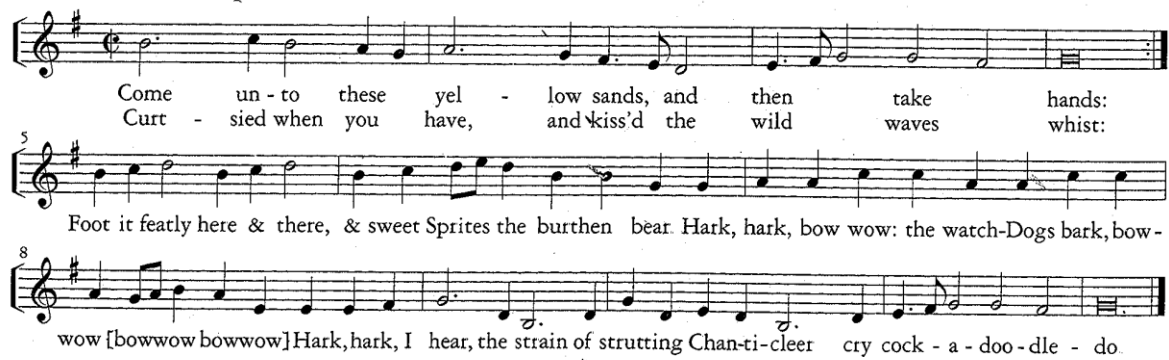


Figure 12—“Come Unto These Yellow Sands,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W, W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 112.

Unlike Ariel’s other pieces, no musical setting for “Come Unto These Yellow Sands” survives. Scholars contend, however, that because of the similarities in metrical setting between this and *Nutmegs and Ginger*, they likely shared a tune (Duffin, 113). The tune of *Nutmegs and Ginger*, also known as *Kemp’s Jig*, can be found in two Oxford University manuscripts that date from as early as 1585; the text can also be found in the Folger Library MS. V.b.280 (ca. 1590) (Duffin, 113). While scholars know that the other two of Ariel’s major songs were original compositions, no such information can be proven about “Come Unto These Yellow Sands.” Therefore, critics usually base their analyses on scores of *Nutmegs and Ginger*. Because this

uncertainty exists, however, it is possible that Robert Johnson wrote “Come Unto These Yellow Sands” as an original composition as well and the music does not survive. This assertion is logical, as it would follow the pattern of Ariel’s other songs. For this analysis, however, I will base my assertions on the surviving manuscript of *Nutmegs and Ginger*.

Musically, this piece is very simple, written solidly in the key of G major and employing no chromaticism. The phrases “come unto these yellow sands, and then take hands” and “curtsied when you have, and kiss’d the wild waves whist” are repeated on the same musical phrases, resulting in an AA form with B and C phrases that are more rhythmically and metrically complex. The overall effect of this music, however, is quite harmonious. The first repeated phrase ends by emphasizing the tonic of G, as does the final phrase of the C section, on the lyrics “cry cock-a-doo-dle do.” While not completely regular rhythmically, I believe that Shakespeare used this consonant, major, uplifting tune as Ariel’s first song to reflect the internal harmony of the island he represents. While singing “Come Unto These Yellow Sands,” Ariel leads Ferdinand to Miranda, and Ferdinand responds by saying:

Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the King my Father’s wrack.
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury, and my passion
With its sweet ayre

(*The Tempest*, I.ii.390-394)

As a “sweet ayre,” this description necessitates a harmonious, soothing melody. Still, Shakespeare could have employed a minor, haunting tune which could have been equally harmonious, and perhaps even more appropriate for such a mysterious and otherworldly island. By choosing such a cheerful tune solidly in a major key, however, I believe Shakespeare depicts the inherent goodness present on the island through Prospero’s redemption through grace, and therefore, the inherent goodness of the *musica mundana* that the island represents.

Immediately after Ferdinand's initial response to "Come Unto These Yellow Sands,"

Ariel begins to sing "Full Fathom Five," the lyrics of which are thus:

*Full fathom five thy Father lies,
Of his bones are Coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a Sea-change
Into something rich, and strange:
Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell.
Burthen: ding. Dong.
Hark now I hear them, ding-dong bell.*

(*The Tempest*, I.ii.397-405)

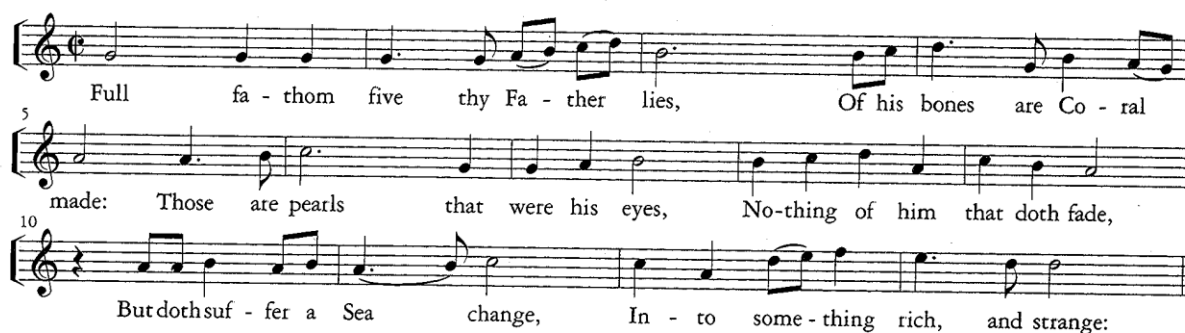


Figure 13—"Full Fathom Five," from Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York: W, W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 157.

"Full Fathom Five" is one of the few tunes from Shakespeare's era for which scholars are relatively sure of the original setting. The earliest surviving musical documents are from John Wilson's *Cheerfull Ayres* in 1659 and Birmingham Central Library MS 57316 in the 1660s (Duffin, 158).²² Both of these manuscripts attribute the music to Robert Johnson.²³

Contrasting the major mode of "Come Unto These Yellow Sands," "Full Fathom Five" is set in

²² John Wilson was an English composer, lutenist, and singer. His *Cheerful Ayres* is the self-proclaimed first music publication in Oxford. The tunes included were very melodic and popular (Spink, "Wilson, John").

²³ Robert Johnson was an indentured servant for George Carey, the Lord Chamberlain from 1596 through 1603. John Johnson, Robert's father, was a well-known lutenist (Duffin, 159). In 1604, he was appointed lutenist for King James I and held that position until his death in 1633. He also wrote many works for theatrical productions and court masques, predominantly for Ben Jonson, and it is for these works that he is best known (Lumsden).

the Mixolydian mode.²⁴ While definitely apart from the typical Ionian major mode, evoking a different mood, the Mixolydian mode, along with the Lydian mode, are considered more closely related to the Ionian, while the Dorian and the Phrygian modes are considered more closely related to the Aeolian minor (Giebler, 2). By using the Mixolydian mode, Johnson conveys the positive, uplifting aspects of the island that Ariel represents, while also expressing its otherworldly quality. While “Come Unto These Yellow Sands” purely reflects the positive qualities of the *musica mundana* present on the island, “Full Fathom Five” takes this reflection further, still representing the harmonious *musica mundana*, while also representing the otherworldly, distant, and removed aspects of the island as well. Shakespeare has created a Protestant world, but he still questions its validity, and Johnson could be using the Mixolydian mode to help slightly alter the mood created by the music without truly departing from the cheerful tone. Additionally, the Mixolydian mode helps to express the more somber meaning of the text, which describes Ferdinand’s father, whom Ferdinand believes to be dead.

The lyrics for “Where the Bee Sucks,” Ariel’s final major song, are thus:

*Where the Bee sucks, there suck I,
In a Cowslip’s bell, I lie,
There I couch when Owls do cry,
On the Bat’s back I do fly
After Summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the Bough*

(The Tempest, V.i.88-94)

²⁴ The Mixolydian Mode is the seventh of the eight common church modes and is the authentic mode beginning on G. It consists of a whole step, a whole step, a half step, a whole step, a whole step, a half step, and a whole step, in that order (Powers and Wiering).

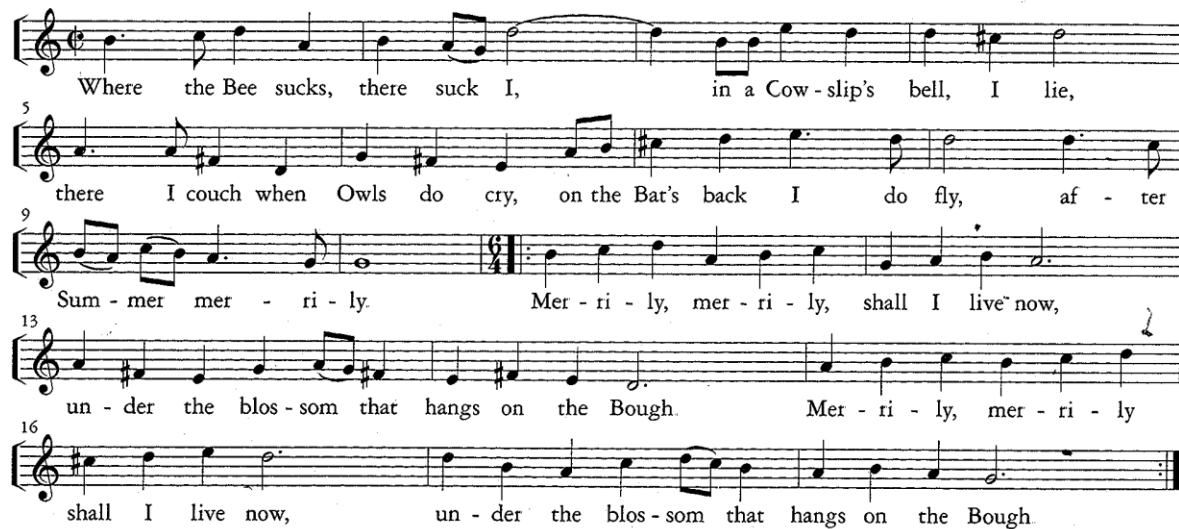


Figure 14—“Where the Bee Sucks,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 454.

Like “Full Fathom Five,” scholars believe that the original setting of “Where the Bee Sucks” also survives. The earliest musical source for the tune is at the Oxford Bodleian Library MS Don.c.57 (ca. 1625-1650), where it is attributed to John Wilson (Duffin, 455). Wilson, who was born in 1595 and was therefore too young to have written the setting for the original production, attributes the piece again to Robert Johnson in his *Cheerful Ayres* from 1660 (Duffin, 455). Musically, this piece is significantly more complex than Ariel’s other two major songs. The piece shifts harmonically from D major to G major, hinting at both throughout. Beginning in D Major and modulating to G Major, as the piece does, however, is harmonically logical, as D is the dominant of G and modulating from the dominant major key to the tonic major key is a common tonal practice. Formally, the piece follows an approximate ABCC’CC’ form, although this could certainly be debated, as the piece is metrically and rhythmically complex as well.

While more complex than “Come Unto These Yellow Sands” and “Full Fathom Five,” “Where the Bee Sucks” still follows in Ariel’s general pattern of using a major mode. The

three pieces increase in complexity as they chronologically progress throughout the play. Therefore, as the action unfolds, Ariel reveals more and more of his otherworldly, supernatural, mysterious qualities. His first song, “Come Unto These Yellow Sands,” establishes the positive, harmonious *musica mundana* that the island represents. His second song, “Full Fathom Five,” continues in that vein, while also beginning to reveal aspects of the mysterious nature of the island through the use of the Mixolydian mode. “Where the Bee Sucks,” through its formal, rhythmic, and harmonic complexity, reveals more of this mysterious nature, while still remaining major, therefore still representing the positive *musica mundana* present. Also, unlike the other two songs, Ariel uses the personal pronoun in this text, signifying his personal investment in Prospero’s future actions. He sings this song as he dresses Prospero for the final scene in his special robes, and if Prospero succeeds in his confrontation of the sailors, Ariel will be released. Therefore, in this instance, Ariel is no longer merely a mouthpiece, but a character invested in the music he represents. Perhaps Ariel’s active presence in this piece also adds to its increased complexity.

I also believe that this chronological increase in musical complexity represents Shakespeare’s religious confusion regarding the Protestant worldview that he has created. As someone unable to fully commit to any religious belief system, Shakespeare would have had doubts about the validity of the harmonious, just, Protestant universe of *The Tempest*. Therefore, while still in a major mode and still mainly arguing for this Protestant worldview, the increase in musical complexity could be a means of questioning and a reflection of possible doubts on Shakespeare’s part about the complete veracity of this view.

Although disconnected from the harmonious workings of the island, Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban also sing, although they sing songs of a different type. David Lindley argues that

while the music of these lower class characters seems less important than that of Ariel and the island, it still plays an important role in the unfolding of the drama (Lindley, 219). As has been demonstrated, Shakespeare used drinking songs for various purposes in both *Othello* and *Twelfth Night*, and does again in *The Tempest*. In Act II scene ii, as their reveling begins, Stephano sings “The Master, the Swabber,” the lyrics of which are thus:

I shall no more to sea, to sea, here shall I die ashore.
 This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man's
 Funeral: well, here's my comfort. (Drinks)
The Master, the Swabber, the Boatswain and I;
The Gunner; and his Mate
Lov'd Mall, Meg, and Marian, and Margerie,
But none of us car'd for Kate.
For she had a tongue with a tang,
Would cry to a Sailor go hang:
She lov'd not the savour of Tar nor of Pitch,
Yet a Tailor might scratch her where e'er she did itch.
Then to Sea Boys, and let her go hang.
 This is a scurvy tune too:
 But here's my comfort. (Drinks).

(*The Tempest*, II.ii.42-55)

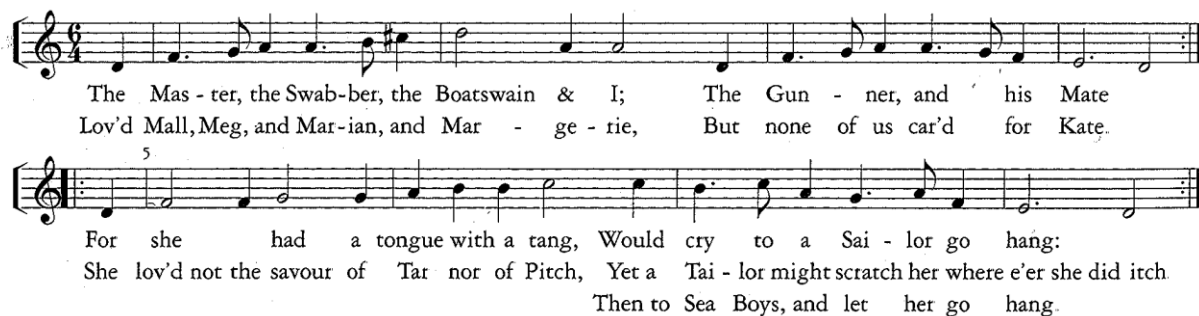


Figure 15—“The Master, the Swabber,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 260.

No original setting of this text survives, but the metrical structure very closely aligns with “The Lusty Gallant,” causing scholars to believe this to be the traditional tune (Duffin, 261). This tune survives in the Dallis Lute Book, dated 1583 through 1585, and at Dublin, Trinity College MS 408/2, dated approximately 1605 (Duffin, 261). As an important contrast

to two of the songs of Ariel, this ballad is not an original tune, and therefore would have had associations for the audience, inviting them in and creating a sense of recognition (Lindley, 220). Musically, the piece is set predominantly in the Dorian mode, which is a mode more closely aligned to the Aeolian minor, as has been previously discussed. There is one instance of chromaticism in the first measure, in which a C# is present, hinting momentarily at D major. Formally, the piece is quite simple, as there are two phrases that are both repeated twice. Both phrases end on the tonic of D, creating a sense of finality.

While in *Twelfth Night* we are invited to enjoy the revelry of the drunken singing, I argue that within *The Tempest*, this drunken music serves to highlight the differences between characters that are in and out of tune with the *musica mundana* represented on the island. Stephano reveals drink to be his “comfort,” and it is drink that inspires him to sing in the first place. Within the Protestant world of the play, however, God and grace are meant to be one’s comfort, not alcohol. Prospero’s redemption allows him to command the music of the spheres for his purposes, but Stephano, Trinculo, Antonio, Sebastian, and, currently, Caliban, are among the reprobate. While they engage in song, they are songs of a different kind, songs of sin. The ballad and catch forms employed by these characters are earthly songs, not heavenly songs, representing their earthly focus and their status as among the material and the damned.

Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo also sing a catch entitled “Flout’em and Cout’em.”

The scene, including the song, is the following:

CALIBAN: Thou mak’st me merry: I am full of pleasure, Let us be jocund. Will you troll the Catch You taught me but while-ere?

STEPHANO: At thy request Monster, I will do reason, Any reason: Come on Trinculo, let us sing.

*Flout ’em and cout ’em: and scout ’em, and flout ’em,
Thought is free.*

CALIBAN: That’s not the tune.

Ariel plays the tune on a Tabor and Pipe

STEPHANO: What is this same?

TRINCULO: This is the tune of our Catch, played by the picture of No-body.

(*The Tempest*, III.ii.116-126)

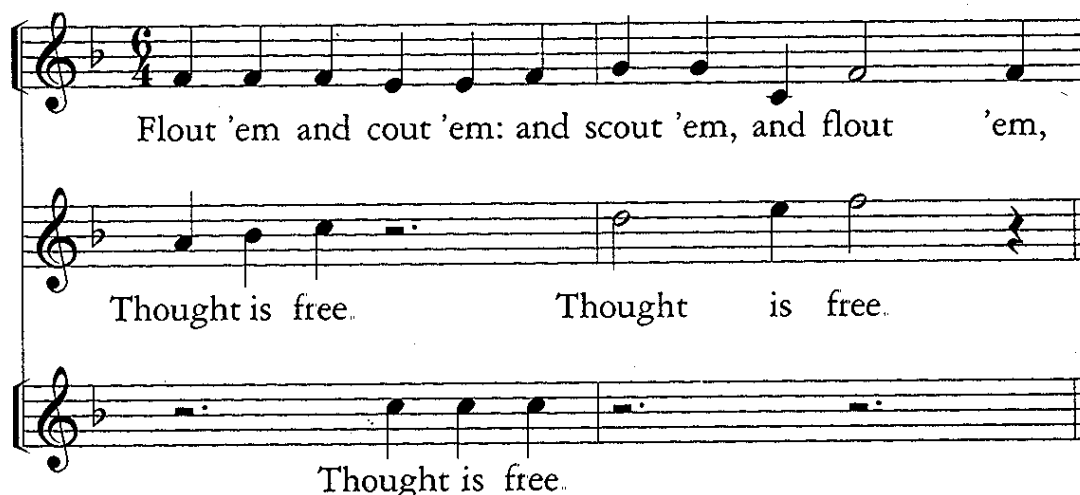


Figure 16—“Flout'em and Cout'em,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W,W Norton Company, 2004, pg. 146.

Although no reference to an original setting for this tune is found in the First Folio, a likely tune can be identified because both Caliban and Trinculo identify it as a round and because Ariel plays it on a tabor pipe (Duffin, 146). Because the tabor pipe has a range of an octave plus a fourth below, or a melodic eleventh, scholars have found a tune that matches this range and text in Ravenscroft’s *Pammelia*, dated 1609, and in the Melvill Book of Roundels, dated 1612.²⁵ This tune, written by Ravenscroft, is entitled “Holy Thy Peace.” Musically, this piece is quite simple; it is written solidly in the key of F major and is a three part round, employing no chromaticism. As a catch, like other catches previously discussed, the tune is associated with tavern life and characters of a lower echelon (Lindley, 221). In a major key and

²⁵ Thomas Ravenscroft was an English editor, composer, and theorist. In 1609, he edited the *Pammelia*, which is the earliest English printed edition of rounds and catches (Mateer and Payne). The Melvill Book of Roundels was a manuscript of English rounds published in Aberdeen in 1612. A round is defined as a single melody line constructed so that it forms its own harmony when sung as a canon (Johnson, “Round”).

written in a simple fashion, this catch, because it is associated with earthly drunkenness, is a song of sin, and therefore far removed from the major tunes of Ariel.

Importantly, Ariel enters and accompanies this tune while invisible, playing “the tune on a Tabor and Pipe.”²⁶ Because Ariel is invisible at the time, Trinculo refers to the mysterious music maker accompanying them as “the picture of No-body.” By being invisible to these characters, Ariel emphasizes how Stephano and Trinculo are dissonant and removed from the inner-workings of the island. Caliban, through acknowledging “that’s not the tune,” hints at his musical nature and his status as among the chosen, showing himself to be in tune with his musical surroundings. Also, by accompanying them in their drunken, earthly song, Ariel does not help these reprobate characters to achieve salvation or to repent, but helps them to continue on in their sinful behavior, further emphasizing their nature as reprobate and therefore beyond the possibility of assistance. This is a Protestant worldview where salvation can only be achieved through God’s grace, not through the works of human beings, and therefore these individuals, as reprobate, have no hope of being saved and no reason to stop engaging in their sinful, earthly behavior.

Despite living in sin, Caliban is still musical. In addition to identifying the catch as “out of tune,” he sings the following with Stephano and Trinculo:

*No more dams I'll make for fish,
Nor fetch in firing, at requiring,
Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish,
Ban' ban' Cacaliban
Has a new Master; get a new Man.*

(The Tempest, II.ii.180-85)

²⁶ The pipe and tabor are a pair of instruments, consisting of a three-hold duct flute and a snared drum, that are played by one person, usually for dancing. In England, it was approximately 30 centimeters long, pitched in D, and with a range usually of an 11th or a 12th (Baines and la Rue).

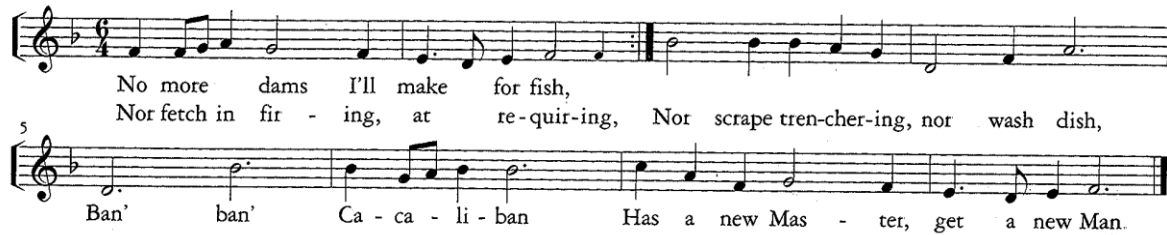


Figure 17—“No More Dams I’ll Make for Fish,” from Ross Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, New York: W, W Norton Company: 2004, 274.

No original setting survives for Caliban’s text, but the five line stanza of the text is quite rare for the Renaissance and Elizabethan eras, and therefore scholars believe these lyrics to have been set to a simplified version of a tune entitled “O Ye Happy Dames” (Duffin, 274). “O Ye Happy Dames” can be found in a lute setting in the British Library MS Stowe 389, dated 1558, and in the Mulliner Book.²⁷ This tune is solidly in F Major and has a very simple, repetitive form of AABA’. Unlike Ariel, whose songs have a heavenly, otherworldly, uplifting quality, this song of Caliban’s “has the ring of a nursery rhyme prattle about it” (Cutts, 351). It is a simple, earthly tune, reflecting his happiness at having “a new Master,” which can be considered either Stephano or alcohol. David Cutts describes Caliban as “all grossness of the flesh as opposed to the spirit” and I believe that this dichotomy helps to establish his disconnect from the island’s harmonious, spiritual inner workings at this juncture (Cutts, 350).

Evidence for Caliban’s eventual salvation comes in Act V scene i, when he returns to Prospero after his drunken adventures with Stephano and Trinculo. Although initially rejecting the salvation offered, he comes to reject his more earthly ways and desire grace:

And I’ll be wise hereafter
 And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass
 Was I, to take this drunkard for a god

²⁷ The Mulliner Book is a collection of keyboard music that was copied by organist, Thomas Mulliner, in the mid-16th century. It includes a wide variety of music, mostly written for organ, and is considered one of the most valuable resources for the keyboard repertory. Composers included in the book are Redford, Tallis, and Blitheman (“Mulliner Book.”)

And worship this dull fool!

(*The Tempest*, V.i.295-298)

Through “seek[ing] for grace,” I argue that the play thereafter assumes Caliban to be among the saved. Although his fate at the end of the play remains ambiguous, he shows a change of heart and an acceptance of Prospero’s power, representative of an acceptance of God’s providential design. By rejecting Stephano and Trinculo and agreeing to be “wise hereafter” and to “seek for grace,” I believe Shakespeare portrays Caliban as a redeemed sinner, one among the chosen.

While I find the universe of *The Tempest* to be a predominantly Protestant one, other critics disagree. David Beauregard, in his article entitled “New Light on Shakespeare’s Catholicism: Prospero’s Epilogue in *The Tempest*,” argues that textual references indicate that Shakespeare has created a Catholic world in *The Tempest*. The majority of his argument comes from the final two lines of Prospero’s epilogue, in which Prospero says “as you from crimes would pardoned be,/Let your indulgence set me free” (*The Tempest*, Epilogue, 19-20). Beauregard believes that this reference to indulgences, along with other references to sin, grace, and pardon, point to a Catholic universe for the play (Beauregard, 161). I believe, however, that when viewed from a larger context, the world of the play remains Protestant. Still, I do see these clearly Catholic-leaning textual references, and the presence of an otherworldly supernatural, evidenced through Prospero’s use of magic and the presence of heathen goddesses, as reflections of Shakespeare’s religious questioning.

While *The Tempest* seems generally Protestant in its workings, Shakespeare defies many of the tenets of Protestantism through the magical nature of the play and through its reliance on music and theatrics as manifestations of divine order. Protestants, particularly the most extreme Puritans, were very skeptical of magic in the Elizabethan era and afterwards. Claims of magical

activity were viewed as acts of witchcraft, and there were trials of purported witches during the Elizabethan era and continuing into the 17th century, most notably among Puritans in Salem, Massachusetts (Herrington, 468). Therefore, making Prospero an issuer of God's will through magic would have seemed unsettling for staunchly Protestant audiences. Prospero does not appear as a prophet, or one who receives God's power to perform miracles, but as a true magician, wearing robes signifying his position. This juxtaposition of a redeemed Protestant magician using his powers on behalf of God would have been quite a jarring image.

Shakespeare also infuses doubt into his otherwise Protestant cosmos by having the harmony of the spheres represented through theatrical music. As previously discussed, Ariel, the manifestation of the *musica mundana*, sings to represent the inner workings of the island. While I see this as Shakespeare making an explicit connection between the Boethian levels of music, Protestant audiences were notably more skeptical of music, as evidenced through their preference for simple church tunes emphasizing Biblical text as opposed to complicated Catholic polyphony, discussed previously in relation to *Twelfth Night* (Spelman, 169). Even more shocking, this music often manifests in theatrical ways, particularly within the masque scene. Juno, one of the spirits that Prospero conjures, sings a song entitled "Honors, Riches, Marriage, Blessing" as a way of blessing Ferdinand and Miranda's impending union. Prospero's conjuring of pagan spirit goddesses likely would have been considered idolatry in a Protestant context. Additionally, the very theatricality of the drama, demonstrated through the masque, seems at odds with extreme Protestant doctrine, as it was the Puritans who often advocated for and eventually achieved the elimination of the theatre itself in 1640s (Cohen). While outwardly and predominantly a Protestant working universe, Shakespeare continues to question its validity by incorporating distinctly un-Protestant elements.

The Tempest shows Shakespeare making perhaps his most sophisticated use of music. Through his use of both known songs and original compositions for *musica instrumentalis*, he creates a dichotomy in preconceived associations of sound that highlights the distinctions between the chosen and the reprobate. Through Ariel, he uses music as a literal and metaphoric representation of the cosmos more explicitly than in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, or *Twelfth Night*. While I believe he uses this music to create a harmonious Protestant worldview, he also shows continuity throughout his works through his refusal to fully commit to a religious belief. Through Prospero's use of magic, references to pagan goddesses, and the strange, otherworldly quality of the island itself, Shakespeare infuses his generally Protestant universe with elements far removed from Protestantism. In *The Tempest*, therefore, I believe Shakespeare consciously uses music to explore Protestantism while also employing other supernatural elements to keep him from having to fully dedicate himself to a Protestant worldview.

VI. Conclusion

By evaluating the Boethian levels of music in relation to *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*, it becomes clear that any sort of reductive approach is insufficient. Shakespeare's intention for each of these plays was quite different, and he used music to serve different purposes in each of them. His works do not depict any kind of personal religious trajectory or progression. Rather, I see each of these plays as an individual experiment through which Shakespeare used music to explore different religious possibilities. Importantly, however, there are similar threads that continue from play to play. One of these elements of continuity is the use of the musical outlier, seen through Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. Another is the effect of familiar versus unfamiliar tunes, seen through Ophelia's mad rantings in

Hamlet compared to Ariel's original songs in *The Tempest*. By identifying these connecting factors, and others similar to them, scholars can better appreciate the role of music within Shakespearean works and its continued importance throughout his career.

It is crucial to remember when evaluating my assertions, however, that the musical material offered as Shakespeare's original can rarely be proven with certitude. All scholars must make do with what information is available in connecting literal musical material to metaphoric musical concepts. That being said, I do not believe that this level of uncertainty should in any way detract from the aurally musical material's ability to suggest possible interpretations. I made my arguments based on the musical material that was available to me, but other scholars could make vastly different assertions by analyzing new musical material discovered in the future. Regardless, analyzing the literal music in conjunction with metaphoric music provides a fuller, more holistic approach to understanding how an Elizabethan audience would have aurally and intellectually received Shakespearean works.

Finally, these musical connections and relationships show Shakespeare as a man experiencing great religious ambivalence. He was not a playwright dogmatically writing according to his own religious beliefs, but one torn and confused by the ambiguity of his age. He creates Catholic, Protestant, and nihilistic universes, offering credence to each of these possibilities. By looking at the music within the text, evidence for this religious questioning becomes much more apparent. I therefore believe that by studying the connections between *musica instrumentalis*, *musica humana*, and *musica mundana* across a representative selection of his works, Shakespeare appears to be a man who experienced religious ambivalence and expressed it subtly through musical and dramatic means.

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